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SANTA CRIPPS

"FOR what we are about to receive . . . ?" But should we be "truly thankful"? Ever since devaluation we have been told by the economic pundits of the Conservative Party that the country is living beyond its means; and Sir Stafford Cripps has been magically transformed by his critics from a miserable savage, deliberately compelling the nation to adopt his own meagre diet, into a profligate distributor of dollar-financed "bread and circuses." Will the critics of this national profligacy follow their political precepts in private life? If so, Mr. Churchill will have to impose savage cuts on his Christmas consumption of cigars and brandy as an example to the spendthrift workers who have been thronging the shops this week; and Lord Woolton, who last February was pressing for the abolition of sweet rationing so that a young man could once again give his girl a box of chocolates, will this year have to ration himself to a single Mars Bar.

But the Conservative Party has always prided itself on its disregard for mere logic; and we suspect that its leaders will suppress their feelings of guilt and take full advantage of the first non-austerity Christmas since 1939. They may even notice that, compared with even two years ago, our rations are positively spacious; the prices we have to pay for a few of our presents have dropped and at long last there are plenty of good toys. But we doubt whether many of them will say thank you for that to Santa Cripps.

Yet, strangely enough, the lavishness of this Christmas is largely due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's optimism last April. With Spring in his heart and South Hammersmith in his head, he sensed that better times were coming and planned for a considerable increase of home consumption—a few weeks before the American recession knocked us off our balance. It is one of the charms of planning that its effects are felt long after the situation, for which it is designed, has disappeared. The economies in capital expenditure caused by the 1947 convertibility crisis were due to operate in the halcyon days of 1948; and we are benefiting this week from the Chancellor's unawareness last Spring that within six months he would have to devalue the pound. Let us hope that the devaluation cuts, when they fall due next June, will feel like winter underclothes on a glorious summer day and will be quietly put back into the Treasury drawer. Meantime we can give thanks for the Springtime fancies which have made this Christmas so undeservedly jolly.

The Christmas shopper with the real Christmas spirit should always contrive his purchases so that the gifts and cards sent to others nicely exceed in gross number and value those he receives. Here, too, we can congratulate the Government on introducing the Christmas spirit as a permanent part of our national economy. In composing our thank-you letters to our American and Canadian cousins we can feel conscientiously sure that nearly all the value of what we have received has been spent on gifts for our own poorer relations. If, in order to achieve this generosity, the Chancellor has had to make inroads on our gold reserves, he is in good company. Millions of his fellow-countrymen, despite the propaganda of the National Savings Committee, have been doing the same in private life.

Film Policy

This has been a bad year for the film industry, which still seems unwilling or unable to put its house in order. For all their inadequacies, the Gater and Plant reports drew a grim picture of inefficiency, near-bankruptcy, monopoly and other shortcomings of the industry. But we hope that when Mr. Wilson told the House last week that the Government "broadly agreed" with the two reports, he meant agreement with their criticism and not their remedies. Only an optimist would believe that minor adjustments in distribution methods—or similar panaceas—are going to make production more profitable and put the industry on a stable basis. Mr. Wilson rightly set the Government's face against "the facile solution" of ploughing back Entertainments Tax into the industry—a solution of the industry's problems at the taxpayer's expense which would not threaten the entrenched interests. He also pointed out, with justice, that only the Government's Film Finance Corporation saved the industry from total collapse this year: half the films now being made have financial backing from the Corporation. Now the Corporation is by no means free from faults, but it deserves credit for holding the breach in this emergency. The next step is for the Government to draw the right conclusions from this. Private capitalism has failed miserably in the film industry; it has come, cap in hand, to ask for State help. The price of that help must be the acceptance of a thorough reorganisation of the industry. The work of the Finance Corporation must be extended—Sir Michael Balcon's appointment is a welcome addition of talent—and plans must be made now to take over idle studio space, set up a State distributing agency and either a State or municipal cinema circuit. In the end we shall have to come to this, because no other solution will work. Clearly, such drastic steps must wait upon the election results, but Mr. Wilson should have a coherent and Socialist film policy ready, either for the election platform or for the next Labour Government.

A Check to Malan

Dr. Malan has been forced temporarily to shelve his proposal to abolish Native representation and to curtail drastically the Cape Coloured franchise. Mr. Havenga, the Finance Minister, has threatened to resign if the Nationalists insisted on this legislation, arguing that it is unconstitutional to repeal the "entrenched clauses" of South Africa's constitution by a simple majority, as Dr. Malan intended. These "entrenched clauses

protect the franchise Dr. Malan dislikes, and Mr. Havenga believes a two-thirds majority, which Dr. Malan cannot command, is needed to get rid of them. Since the Nationalists depend upon the votes of Mr. Havenga's Afrikaner Party, they had to choose between a climb-down or obduracy that would have meant a Cabinet crisis and possibly a general election. But Dr. Malan would be unwise to risk an election at the moment. His Budget is bound to be unpopular; and recent by-election results show that he has been losing ground even in safe Nationalist seats. His colleagues have proved to be inept, his administration distinguished only by crude racialism, directed against the Africans, Indians and, to a lesser degree, even against the British. Angered by criticism, the Nationalists have been threatening censorship and reprisals against correspondents who send "slanderous" reports abroad. Dr. Malan was willing to compromise now: it will give him more time to gerrymander; to arrange for Nationalist victories in South-West Africa after incorporation; and to break up domestic opposition, particularly from "Communists"—a problem on which he has apparently been taking expert advice from Sir Percy Sillitoe of M.I.5. Dingaan's Day has come and gone without the predicted dramatic gestures, such as the proclamation of a republic at the unveiling of the Voortrekker Memorial. But Dr. Malan has not yet exhausted the tricks in the Nationalist hand.

National Parks

Walkers and climbers have had a Christmas present in the arrival on the Statute Book of the National Parks Bill and the appointment of the National Parks Commission. The Act has weaknesses, to which attention has more than once been drawn in these columns; and, though the House of Lords did well to confer on the Commission the right to be informed in advance of proposals by Government Departments affecting their terrain, the powers of the Commissioners still remain strictly "advisory and supervisory." With this reservation, the selection of the Commissioners is encouraging. Headed by Sir Patrick Duff, they include representatives of all the various interests—Forestry, the Ramblers Association, the Tourist Board and so forth—and the team is strengthened by the presence on it of Mr. John Wilmot, M.P., who was a founder member of the Workers Travel Association, and, in particular, by the inclusion of Mr. J. J. Lawson, M.P. As one-time Secretary for War, Mr. Lawson should be in a good position to be on guard against invasions of National Park territory by his former Department: there is no gamekeeper so good as an ex-poacher. A graceful tribute has been paid by Mr. Silkin to the memory of John Dower, whose report on national parks paved the way for the present Act; his widow completes the Commission.

Shareholders' Christmas

A Christmas gift of a type which invites queries about the donor's motives has also been bestowed, this time by Sir Stafford Cripps, on a select section of the community—company shareholders. The Chancellor has announced that he is prepared to modify the absolute suspension imposed on bonus issues of share capital. The Capital Issues Committee may in future permit companies to make bonus issues if it establishes that they are necessary to enable production to be expanded with a view particularly to export sales in hard currency markets. Since a company does not secure any fresh capital by issuing bonus shares, it is difficult to detect the logic in this argument. What Sir Stafford apparently is doing is to offer directors a... incentive to participate in "the dollar drive" by permitting them to give their shareholders additional shares—it is, of course, problematic whether the market value of their total holding is thereby increased—on condition that they are good boys. There is perhaps more to be said for this sort of incentive than for the suggestion that exporters should be allowed to dispose freely of a part of their dollar earnings; but the workers in the firms concerned may well wonder where they come in. And how is the Capital Issues Committee going to distinguish between firms entering directly into the export market and those which sell components destined ultimately to be included in export goods?

The Kuomintang "Blockade"

As the Communist forces encircle Chengtu, the last Nationalist capitol on the mainland of China, the Kuomintang rump in Formosa announces that it will mine all Communist-held ports along the 2,000-mile coast. This is its only weapon; and if it can hold the Navy together sufficiently to implement this threat, other countries, especially Britain and America, will be involved. During the past few weeks, the Nationalists have been able to keep most foreign ships from entering Shanghai, but the Communists are massing an amphibian force round Tinghai, ninety miles south, and will undoubtedly open up the port again. The Nationalists will have to operate the blockade, with greater difficulty, from Formosa. But whilst even a few mines can create difficult problems for foreign shipping, these high-sounding threats to mine a coast from Yingkow in North China to Tinpak, in Kwangtung, begin to sound like the fantasies of Chinese Generals who announced their fight to the last man. There remained until last week the assets of the China National Aviation Corporation and the Central Air Transport Corporation in Hongkong. The staffs of both of them had gone over to the Communists. But General Chennault, who made enormous profits with his "Flying Tigers," came to the rescue by buying up the assets, including seventy aircraft, to prevent them falling into Communist hands. While Nationalists and Communists dispute this private racket, General Chennault and his partner ask for the protection of the Hongkong Government for this "privately owned American property." On the political front, the Burmese Government has been the first to face the facts in China and has recognised the new Government. The Commonwealth lags behind, losing face and time.

"Integration"

Discussion on steps towards West European economic integration goes not altogether merrily ahead. Fritalux has turned into Finebel, but is having a very rough passage because of French industrialists' reluctance to see their tariffs lowered or even abolished so as to let in Italian and Belgian products. The Stockholm talks between Great Britain and the Swedes have run into heavy weather both over coal prices and over free convertibility between krone and sterling, but are to be resumed in the New Year. Meanwhile Sir Stafford Cripps has gone to Paris for a meeting of the eight-Power "Inner Cabinet" of O.E.E.C. on the question of liberating inter-European payments and "integrating" the European economies enough to impress the United States Congress when it comes to consider the future of Marshall Aid. A report from O.E.E.C. on these matters is due to be delivered to the Americans by the end of the year; but this can hardly be more than a collective statement by the countries concerned of what they have already agreed to do. The wider issues are not due to be considered by the full O.E.E.C. Council till the middle of January. This week's meeting is said to be considering a possible reorganisation of O.E.E.C. to give it stronger executive functions, and possibly a closer relation to the Council of Europe. The Americans seem to be pressing for this; but it is not easy to see how it could work. A delegation of executive authority requires as its basis a common plan; and no such plan can well come from Governments which are hostile to planning even their own economies.

A Question of Balance

An interesting controversy has been going on in the *Observer* between Sir Arthur Salter and the editor on the facts about the British balance of payments. The dispute is not really about the facts, but about the correct way of stating them. Sir Arthur Salter argues that the "national balance" from 1947 to 1949 shows a "minus" of nearly £700 million; the *Observer* retorts that, when all the factors have been taken into account, Great Britain has paid out abroad practically as much as it has received in gifts and loans, and has accordingly not been "living on capital." Two sets of figures are given: one for the whole period since the end of the war and the other for the eighteen months ending in June, 1949. The former show receipts of £1,538 million and outgoings of £1,498 million, and the latter £483 million and £469 million. The former pair of totals include, among the receipts, £1,192 million of U.S. and Canadian loans and £335 million of Marshall Aid, and among the outgoings £493 million of gifts (including war stores), £423 million repaid on sterling balances accounts, and £400 million of overseas loans and another £138 million of overseas investments. These figures are correct: the only question really at issue is whether it is right to include repayments of sterling balances and "flights" of capital among the outgoings for the purpose of striking the balance. The answer is "Yes," if the question is whether we are or are not actually consuming our capital by eating it up at home, but "No" if the question is whether our economy is running satisfactorily on an even keel.

Road and Rail Charges

The British Transport Commission has now announced the principles on which it proposes as soon as possible to re-arrange charges for freight by road, rail and canal. The scheme does not deal with passenger charges, about which proposals are to be put forward later. For freight, subject to some exceptions, there are to be uniform scales of charges, calculated in terms of road distances and irrespective of the means of transport actually employed. This is likely to mean in most cases some increase above present road charges; but Sir Cyril Hurcomb, at a press conference, denied that these would be large or that the Commission had any intention of subsidising the railways out of the proceeds of road carriage. He pointed out that a small readjustment of the total freight charge would be ample enough to turn the existing railway deficit into a surplus; for it is only about £20 million out of total receipts of £500 million. The proposal to fix a single schedule of charges without regard to the actual form of transport used has been expected from the first to be one of the main sequels to nationalisation of the rival transport agencies, and has evidently much to recommend it, both on grounds of simplicity and because it is the obvious way of securing a balanced and economical use of the transport service as a whole. It will be necessary to retain special rates for certain services, including goods transport by passenger train; and there will have to be a great deal of discussion with trading interests before

the new plan can come into force. It will have to go at some stage to the Transport Tribunal, which has the last word, and will hold a public inquiry before approving it—if it does approve. Meanwhile, the higher rail charges recently announced will allow the railways to carry on under less straitened conditions.

Unofficial Strikes

It would be interesting to know how many of the important strikes of the past 75 years have been "unofficial" ones. Many of them, in their time, were illegal for reasons which do not apply to-day. At the time of the great strike in 1889 for the "dockers' tanner," it was common for little trade unions to be formed for the sole, temporary purpose of calling a strike in some previously unorganised industry—like the manufacture of matches—and collecting public money in support of it. To-day, with every trade represented in some great amalgamation, this can no longer be done. The risk and drama have gone out of industrial relations; and, as with the recent strike of the London power-station men, the rank and file complain that they do not know what their leaders are up to. The Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order, 1940, prohibiting strikes over any dispute that has not been reported to the Minister of Labour and referred by him for settlement within 21 days, often has the effect that when the Minister issues a warning that a proposed strike would be unlawful, all he does is to turn an official strike into an unofficial one. Yet, as a rule, he proceeds to draw the teeth of this pronouncement by offering the men arbitration, which is usually what they want; and the union that condemned them as a "breakaway organisation" is reduced to futility. What the rank-and-file feel to be the remoteness of their union leaders is a new aspect of the philosophy of size and power. It is too easy to believe, without looking up the story, that the little unions of the last century achieved big results, and too easy to forget the starvation and failure that broke them, forcing them into the huge amalgamations that seem so impersonal to-day.

The Church and the Atom

Church jurists find the moral implications of the atomic-bomb recurrently disturbing. Even the canons of a "just war" get rather hypocritical when invoked in defence of Christian initiative in bombing. The Church of England's *The Church and the Atom* was, to put it mildly, an unsatisfactory document in its if-so-perhaps. Hiroshima and Nagasaki might be justified as a military or political necessity, but never on moral grounds. The hereditary legacies of the bomb-rays are still unknown and a so-called "just war" has never so far usurped the judgment of God and visited upon the third, fourth, perhaps even fifth and sixth generations, the crimes of one generation. Now the conscience of certain churchmen, led by the Bishop of Exeter, is perturbed by recent manifestations, beginning with General Bradley's statement last July that the first priority of joint defence is the ability to deliver the atomic bomb. In a letter to *The Times* they point out that military and political commentators, including Lord Trenchard, assume that the foundation of Western defence would be an immediate aerial counter-offensive. Denouncing "obliteration" bombing, the churchmen declare that while "those who are organising Western defence cannot be expected to tell potential enemies what restrictions they would observe in the use of the bomb," they challenge the basic assumptions. "There are many who, though they are not pacifists, could not reconcile it with their consciences to support the kind of policy which is now being vigorously advocated."

THE BREAK IN THE CLOUDS

THE strongest public sentiment in the United States is the dislike of being "kicked around"; and the most unpopular philosophy is imperialism, which is the assumption of one nation that it has the right to kick around other nations. In the past, Britain has been the arch imperialist; to-day, Soviet Russia is the obvious claimant for the role of principal bully. The difficulty of this moralist approach to a sociological problem is that the suggestion that America has now herself reached an imperialist phase is regarded as an offensive accusation instead of a statement of fact. For an imperialist country is merely one which has a surplus of capital and energy to spend overseas. Usually, but not necessarily, this phase also involves an expansionist psychology and the desire to establish a stranglehold on backward areas. For this, political and territorial occupation is not essential; financial imperialism may be just as effective.

Because the United States is now clearly in this sense "imperialist," there is a too simple tendency among Socialists to assume that the type of behaviour that has been so spectacularly unsuccessful in China will be repeated in other parts of the world. If it is, the next chapter in mankind's history will tell a story of war and Communism. There are, however, progressive, counteracting trends in the United States; it is now very widely realised that Communism spreads, not because people love Soviet domination, but because workers and peasants respond to constructive leadership, even if Communist, when capitalism has nothing to offer except the old familiar miseries. In brief, there are many people in America who understand that our primary concern is not with what the Soviet Union is doing, but with our own problem of discovering, within the West, the creative capacity to satisfy the needs and aspirations of that half of the world which is not under Communist control.

The war has speeded up the conflict by vastly accentuating the disequilibrium between the United States and the rest of the capitalist world. America wants little from bankrupt countries which therefore lack the dollars to buy the food and materials and manufactures which only America has available for sale. How then can America employ its surplus to save itself from over-production and the rest of the dependent world from chaos and starvation? Mr. Roosevelt had an inkling of the answer when he made Lend-Lease a gift instead of a for-ever unpayable loan. Unrra came to the rescue when Lend-Lease ended; it saved countless lives; it began the process of post-war building and rescued America from the immediate fear of slump. When political sentiment refused to perpetuate Unrra, Marshall Aid took its place. Mr. Marshall's Harvard speech was a clear exposition of a programme which combined relief and long-term investment; it expected, as a return, not quick profit but the development of backward areas to the mutual advantage of the West and of the primary producers whose abysmal poverty is the root of so much evil. His speech was a repetition of the doctrine which Henry Wallace propounded in the middle of the war. Russia's failure to make use of the immense political and economic opportunity afforded by Mr. Marshall's speech—and its refusal to allow Eastern Europe to profit by it—enabled the less far-sighted or more selfish American interests to go far in transforming Marshall Aid into martial aid, thereby destroying its function and purpose. If, indeed, the day is won by those in America who believe that the way to combat Communism is to arm all anti-Soviet forces, then, indeed, the West has little to hope for. In that way, dependence and poverty and bankruptcy are assured for the satellite nations. If they spend their resources in arming against Soviet Communism, Communism within their own territory will inevitably grow. It is because this is so clearly true that Mr. Truman emphasises the Fourth Point as the way to spend the American surplus in 1952.

It is not too much to say that our hope of peace and prosperity depends on the practical interpretation of the Fourth Point. As soon as Mr. Truman stated that America was prepared to spend large sums on backward areas, the Powers began to present schemes. Africa offered obvious possibilities. Britain had at least learnt one lesson from the Ground Nuts Scheme—that Africa is not a continent from which quick returns can be expected. If private capital has been slow to invest there, it is not because Africa is not worth developing but because no immediate profit is to be expected. Labour is short; it is also too hungry to work well. Strange diseases and innumerable pests retard the best-laid schemes of pioneers, whether they work for private enterprise or for the State.

Given time and patience, however, the possibilities are incalculable. British blueprints for the development of power on the Zambesi and the Nile, for instance, do not look for quick returns, but are long-term projects which in time will totally transform vast, and now sterile, areas. If it is objected that political sentiment among the Africans, now rapidly becoming politically conscious, will not wait so long, the answer is that, if money is intelligently invested in pilot schemes, if experts in anthropology and native welfare do their work, if Africans are themselves given training and the opportunity to participate in these schemes, if, above all, they are obviously directed to Africa's advantage and not only for the benefit of the advanced nations, then the African will himself see the advantages of co-operation.

Here mankind begins to explore a hopeful project. From it may be born again a pioneering spirit which is neither imperialist nor hypocritical because it genuinely benefits the African as well as the West. The West in this case might even be in partnership, instead of in rivalry, with the East, since the Assembly of the United Nations has now unanimously voted to set up a Technical Assistance Board to work on such projects. The danger here is that Western countries, finding themselves in the unaccustomed position of having undertaken a common project with the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites, may refuse to go forward in the belief that Communist countries will only sabotage any enterprise in which the West is involved. That is to accept defeat. We should not take it for granted that the Soviet Union will not technically assist areas outside its political influence. If it does, or if it obstructs, then the onus is on the Soviet Union. Whatever the Russian attitude, our true policy is to show that we have ceased to be "capitalists" and "imperialists" in the old sense of the word. If we are capable of any creative purpose, we shall not be debarred from it by Russia or by the fact that it does not produce a profit for private individuals. Dnieperstroi dams and Tennessee Valley Authorities are wanted in backward areas in all the five continents. They cannot be produced by private capitalists; they can be produced by far-sighted and enterprising men, whether they come from the East or the West.

REPORT ON CZECHOSLOVAKIA—I

After nearly a month in Czechoslovakia, I am more convinced than ever that nine-tenths of all our professional anti-Communist propagandists, including some on the "Voice of America" and, to a lesser extent, on the B.B.C., are barking up the wrong tree. Privations, shortages of food and consumer goods—these are precisely the evils which are *not* inherent in the Communist regimes of the New Democracies. By and large, the opposite is true. If Czechoslovakia's material conditions continue to improve at the rate at which they have improved in the last year, she will soon be more prosperous than any country in Western Europe. There is practically no unemployment; the *per capita* production, as well as the real wages, of the industrial worker is above the pre-war level; and from being one of the worst-fed countries in Europe a year ago, Czechoslovakia is to-day one of the better-fed. Life has radically changed—materially for the better, morally (from our Western standpoint) for the worse.

No doubt there are shortages still. The milk ration for children above three is still inadequate, and the basic rations of minor Government officials are still lower than those in England; but there have been many spectacular improvements. On September 1, after the second good Czech harvest in succession, the rationing of bread and of all flour products was abolished. One result is that the whole of Prague is guzzling cream cakes. Walking down Prikope or Wenceslas Square, one would think that shopping and eating was a full-time job for half the population of Prague. There are Christmas crowds in the glassware shops, in the crockery shops, the toy shops, the bijouterie shops and, above all, in the Pramen (grocery), T.E.P. (textile) and J.A.S. (footwear) stores, where goods are marked *volni prodej*—free sale.

These "free" shops are one of the most striking features of Prague this year. In them you pay ten shillings for a pound of fillet steak, five shillings for a pound of cheese, £10 for a pair of men's shoes—three, four, or five times what you would pay on the ration—but, so what? Millions of people have the extra cash. It is not undemocratic, one is told: on the contrary, the more you work, the more you earn, the more you can buy in the *volni* shops. Take an average family with three wage-earners—father earning say, 4,000 crowns, mother 3,000, and daughter another 3,000; that's ten thousand, or £50. Less than half goes on rations, rent and heating; and there is a margin of 5,000 crowns every month to play about with. In England, the "idle rich" would be the chief beneficiaries of your Pramen. Not so in Czechoslovakia; here the "rich" (except for a dwindling class of black-marketeers) are "those who work most."

All this, of course, may be a bit of a reflection on the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses. But the Czech Communist leaders are realistic; your Czech worker is not the kind of fellow who easily falls for revolutionary oratory, and he does not like to be pushed around. So, give him more steak, and he'll work harder. But even that is not quite true. There comes a point where he'll decide that two steaks are enough, and, rather than work hard for a third steak, he'll go to the pictures. That is what the Czech Communist leaders are up against. "Every Communist must be a shock-worker," Gottwald said; but less than ten per cent of the entire trade union membership of over 3 million are shock-workers, and there is considerable resistance to the introduction of Socialist competition and Stakhanovism in the Czech factories. There have even been some strikes, of which the Press has said next to nothing, and a good deal of absenteeism, on the principle, no doubt, that two steaks are enough, and never mind about the third. Indeed, malingering has been so common that the rules concerning medical certificates have been severely tightened up.

Yet, by and large, the system is working. If many don't want their third steak, everybody seems to want a second steak, and, after the new year, prices in the "free shops" will be cut once more. There are also rumours to the effect that wages, too, will be cut. This is possible, since one of the principles of Czech economy is not to allow wages to run too far ahead of prices—which was the case until the end of last year. (Since then Czechoslovakia has become one of the very rare countries in the world with a falling note circulation.) Whether the further fall in prices will increase the number of shock-workers is one of the Government's big problems; one has the suspicion that the "third steak" alone won't do the trick, and political pressure is likely to be brought to bear on workers to work harder. Secretary Slansky recently warned the Communist Party that no new members except shock-workers would be accepted into the party ranks; and it is commonly believed that any workers who refuse to join shock brigades will, after a number of warnings, be expelled from the party. Needless to say, a stigma attaches to expulsion and is bound to hamper promotion; and, with relatively the largest Communist party in the world, the Czech leaders can well afford to use the purge weapon. Already 100,000 members have been expelled from the party, but there are still over two million left—more than one-sixth of the entire population.

Gottwald's, Zapotocky's, and Slansky's latest speeches are all marked by two themes: "We have achieved wonderful successes in the last year"; and, "Beware if you don't do even better next year." The *motif* of "dear old baby-kissing" Gottwald, which was still fashionable a year ago, is no longer so common now, and is largely confined to magazines like *Czechoslovak Life* intended for foreign consumption. The idea of Gottwald as "the heir of Benes" is not being maintained either. For this is a different world. Along with slogans to the effect that "life will be easier, life will be jollier," modelled on the Soviet slogans of the mid-thirties, a certain hardness and harshness pervades the whole of Czech life to-day. The peasantry are not yet seriously affected by it; the Czech leaders are extremely careful not to antagonise the peasantry, and not to introduce collective methods of cultivation too rapidly. The emphasis in the villages is still on efficiency and greatly increased mechanisation, rather than on collectivisation.

As regards the material side of things, I could not help frequently recalling, while in Prague, the phrase used by de Gaulle, or one of his henchmen: "Much as we hate Communism, Eastern Europe makes sense, and Western Europe does not." And, in this connection, it seems important to explode another favourite myth of our anti-Communist propagandists—that Czechoslovakia is being "mercilessly exploited" by the Soviet Union. It is not. The clear purpose of Soviet policy is to make Czechoslovakia, economically, an outstanding success. Of course, Czech hats, shoes and textiles go to the Soviet Union, and the Czechs I have talked to are only too delighted that they do ("What else would our light industries do"?). In return, Czechoslovakia receives from Russia not only raw materials, and large quantities of food, but, as one Czech leader remarked to me, increasing amounts of elaborate heavy machinery, which the Russians are producing now, and which the Czechs can no longer buy in the West. The emphasis, in the Czech Five-Year Plan, is, of course, on the development of heavy industry, too; but, during the present transition period, the Czechs are only too delighted to find an outlet in Russia for their shoes and textiles and glassware. Nor must China be overlooked. "China," one Czech foreign trade expert said to me, "is an immense asset to us, an almost unlimited market." With a grin he added: "Sometimes it pays to be on the 'wrong' side of the Iron Curtain!"

Equally satisfactory is their trade with the other People's Democracies—Hungary, Poland, Rumania, etc. In return for manufactured and capital goods, they receive whole trainloads of cattle and pigs, and one of the outstanding successes of Czech economy are the pig-feeding centres established on State farms. The favourite story that the Russians merely use Czechoslovakia for turning their raw materials into shoes and textiles, and that *all* these are sent back to Russia, is just another piece of bunkum. The Czechs to-day are far better dressed than they were a year ago. The Czech worker spends a much larger proportion of his wages on clothes than does say, the French worker, who gives top priority to food every time, and is willing to wear any old thing. Indeed, Czechoslovakia has not, outwardly, abandoned her *petit-bourgeois* way of life; Communist prosperity is tending to intensify the middle-class respectability of working-class life as regards housing, clothes, and family manners.

But while Czechoslovakia is, materially, promising to become Europe's showpiece of Socialist planning, not least for the edification of Italy with her millions of unemployed, there is another side to it—the intensive "bolshevisation," the "token terror" of Prague, and the bid to turn the amiable land of Masaryk and Benes into a land of Stalin-loving and Stalin-fearing men and women. "More food, less freedom" just about sums it up. Alexander Werth

Prague, December.

(To be continued.)

A LONDON DIARY

London looks pre-war. To come down Regent Street, positively riotous in colour, into Trafalgar Square, with the Christmas tree and the silver fountains and the streamers and bunting—why, if the Tory press didn't remind you that we are a miserable, enslaved and starving people, you might even kid yourself that England was capable this year of having a merry Christmas. The shops perpetrate the illusion of jollity. Certainly it's eleven years since they looked like this. There are far more imported goods, and also more home-made goods kept at home for the British housewife. It's not only that you can get all the fruit, including pineapples and suchlike, that you want, but that you have only to dip, somewhat deeply, into your pocket, to buy gorgeous luxuries like *marrons glacés* and even chow-chow, lichees, and cumquats—all of which were displayed by one grocer of my acquaintance who had no notion of what they were. I've not yet heard a Hungarian band or seen a man playing a harp in the street, but I have seen a barrow of coconuts. As for poultry, you can only get into the butchers' shops by clambering over mountains of it. (One London paper was so ignorant of the first principles of propaganda that it printed this week a caricature of a queue lining up for one turkey, though every reader would know that if he didn't buy a twelve-pound bird for sixty shillings it would not be because it

wasn't there to buy!) Sugar is still short, but that complaint is lessened by the fact that you can buy all the plum puddings and sweet cakes you want. You can get drunk on anything but whisky. Those who still want to grumble complain that there are no dried eggs or only one egg on this week's ration book. On the whole food front one may say that we can enjoy Christmas cheer in the consciousness that though some things are dear, the basic foods are better in quality and still blessedly low in price. When you come to clothes and toys the situation is very much the same. Small toys have multiplied out of all memory and some are not dear. Big toys are expensive; imported French dolls may be three pounds each and an unfurnished doll's house may cost five pounds. The good mechanical toys, the trains and boats, not to speak of the children's tricycles, are all available again; but their price, I'm told, is double or sometimes treble what it was in pre-war days. For the first time I hear of well-to-do parents buying refurbished, second-hand toys. On the other hand, if you want to give your girl or your wife gloves or a scarf or a pair of bedroom slippers you'll pay less than last year. Add all this up and it's a pretty good and jolly picture. Personally, I shall enjoy Christmas more because under this awful Labour Government we no longer need to subscribe to charity coal—the coldest kind of heating I know of—and, as we shop, we no longer have to look the other way for fear of seeing the pinched and wistful faces of children pressed against the lighted windows.

* * *

The Kostov case only proves that when the Cominform has decided on your execution, it makes no difference whether you confess or not. Kostov may have had some satisfaction from having made it clear that he was being killed for holding a view that Dimitrov, now a demi-god, had also held. It is reported, I do not know on what authority, that after Kostov's death the Cominform claim to have found a letter of confession written by him. That would certainly complete the macabre joke. The real Communist defence for such trials and excutions is that, since the only thing that matters is Soviet victory, Stalinists must always defend anything the Cominform does, however wicked. This is not the case that Mr. Pritt argues in our correspondence columns this week. He would do better to say that in war, and the fight for world power, the end always justifies the means. Instead he argues the nauseating thesis that all those who have been killed in any Communist trial have always been guilty. Mr. Pritt has argued more difficult briefs: the "guilty" are dead and those who executed them are—sometimes—still alive. One single fact, however, out of many that could be adduced, would seem to disprove his thesis. A large number of the most respected Soviet leaders were put to death on evidence collected and attested by Yagoda, head of the G.P.U. Not long after they were dead, Yagoda was himself put to death. One of the principle charges against him was manufacturing false evidence.

* * *

My own view is that, on the facts presented to court, the verdict in the Mannstein trial was right; not guilty on one important count—responsibility for the mass extermination policy of the S.S.—but guilty on a long list of other charges of barbarity. In this trial at least no one can complain that the defence was not given latitude. Mr. Paget and Mr. Silkin—the latter the son of the Minister of Town and Country Planning—were permitted to take a line which was tantamount to challenging the validity of war trials; and Mr. Paget—to the delight of every Nationalist in Western Germany—went on to portray Mannstein as a pure Teutonic knight repelling the Mongolian hordes in a struggle where all rules of war were rendered meaningless by the barbarism of one side. I am glad to see that Dr. Schumacher, for the German Socialists, has accepted the verdict, while very properly protesting against the delay in bringing Mannstein to trial, which is the really indefensible aspect of the whole affair. But I fear that it is Mr. Paget's picture of a chivalrous German, martyred for political reasons, which will have been imprinted indelibly on most German minds.

* * *

A South African journalist writes to ask me whether in England we appreciate how far the South African Government is going in restricting freedom. On November 26th, it seems, the Minister of Posts, Mr. F. C. Erasmus, said at a Nationalist Party function that: "People who send reports to newspapers overseas slandering South Africa must not expect of me that all their reports will reach their destinations." Lest anyone should think this threat to violate the secrecy of the mail was a passing bit of petulance, he followed it up three days later with a long statement, in which he quoted from an article which in general terms belittled the Afrikaans language. He said that this article had been sent by post from South Africa by a journalist to 116 newspapers abroad. He added: "There was never, and there is not, any question of a press censorship, but the besmirching of our people and their most treasured possessions can simply not be tolerated, and the Government considers it its duty to prevent the transmission of this type of message abroad where and wherever it is legally able to do so." Pointing out that under the Post Office Act of 1911 he was authorised to prevent the despatch of matter of a "highly offensive nature," and that "anything but a letter may be opened by the postal department," he said that the official "decision whether an article sent through the post is a letter or any other kind of postal article is final." To make matters doubly sure, he added that if the Post Office Act proved insufficiently strong to prevent the transmission of such offensive matter, the Government would consider amending it. The next day an English businessman living in Durban admitted in a press interview that he had written the article and had sent it in an envelope marked "printed matter." My correspondent points out that the statement of Mr. Erasmus clearly means that correspondents' despatches are already being inspected for unfavourable criticisms, and that it must involve opening at random private letters, since journalists will start sending their copy abroad through private addresses.

* * *

When the *Sunday Express* and the *Daily Worker* agree that something is emphatically and undeniably true, you have every ground for feeling suspicious. The fantastic story that a dozen Labour M.P.s met secretly last week to plot the overthrow of Mr. Bevin is a good example. The simple facts are that a group of Labour backbenchers, without any attempt at secrecy, have been working on a pamphlet called *Keeping Left* which the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is publishing in January. Seven of them in 1947 were signatories of *Keep Left* and five were not; and they spent last week-end at Manchester College in order to consider the final text of their conclusions. I gather that their intention is to get back to the first principles of Socialism and use them as a yardstick for considering the achievements of Labour's first term and the strategy of the second. This is a far more important job—as the Labour defeats in Australia and New Zealand show—than criticism of individual Ministers.

Lord Lyle has decided that we must take Mr. Cube or lump it. There is no more powerful argument for sugar-nationalisation than the total monopoly which forces everyone buying sugar to take the propaganda with it. Since none of us is likely to be strong-willed enough to deny ourselves sugar, there seems to be no redress unless we follow the example of a friend who insists on proof of net weight. He makes his grocer open the packet and weigh the contents on the scales. Then he gets it in a bag and leaves the packet. This would have a definite "nuisance value," if a number of customers practised it. Mr. Cube would have to square the grocers. CRITIC

CHRISTMAS CRISIS

Christmas comes but once a year,
And it's Christmas Day in the morning!

Christmas crisis at the peak!
Only one more shopping week!
Christmas present hunting queues
Little note world crisis news.
Grave Nigerian Unrest . . .
Indonesian Strike Suppressed . . .
Murmuring in Israel . . .
Noël, Noël, Noël, Noël!
Bulgars Hang a Minister . . .
Christmas comes but once a year,
And it's Christmas Day in the morning!

Hark! The herald angels sing!
Have you thought of everything,
Presents for the family,
Decorations for the tree,
Gift-books, knick-knacks, odds and ends,
Calendars for absent friends?
Only three more days to go,
Sing *In dulce jubilo!*
Ties for Him and gloves for Her—
Christmas comes but once a year,
And it's Christmas Day in the morning!

Cards along the mantelshelf
From friends that you forgot yourself,
New Year cards will have to do
(Whatever will they think of you?)
Still more robins, still more lambs,
Still more greeting telegrams,
However can you answer them?
Come, O come to Bethlehem!
Well, the more the merrier,
Christmas comes but once a year,
And it's Christmas Day in the morning!

Zero hour, and no reprieve,
Coming up to Christmas Eve!
Housekeepers with glassy eyes
Load up four-day-siege supplies,
Shops will all be closing then,
Rest you merry, gentlemen!
Much is left unfinished, but
Shops and post-office are shut.
Millions, homeward crawling say
"O my God, it's Christmas Day!
It's Christmas Day in the morning!"

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5 - for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD

It is notorious that the smell of goats is particularly offensive to English people.—High Court Judge, reported in *Daily Herald*. (W. R. P. Bourne.)

So long as . . . school cricket is played with a soft ball, there will be juvenile crime.—Letter in *John Bull*. (Max Jaccard.)

Our people in the past have built empires, invented wonders, withstood blitzes and won wars on the good, plain cooking of the Englishwoman. I am confident they will eventually win the peace on the same stuff.—Letter in *News Chronicle*. (S. Lander.)

It is improbable that any of the few renegade Public School men who belong to the Socialist Party wear the ties of the schools which they have dishonoured.—Letter in *Evening Standard*. (Maurice Thrift.)

She is a leading National Savings voluntary worker in Merioneth. Her pekinese dog called Sion is also a member of a savings group.—*Daily Dispatch*. (L. V. Beharrell.)

America is the most powerful nation on earth; it is only fit and proper that she should have the deciding voice on how countries should be governed, and when and where wars are to be fought. It is high time that American influence for all that is good should be more strongly felt in England. This country has been a dead and alive place since the G.I.s left.—Letter in *Nottingham Evening Post*. (A. Glaskin.)

THE SNATCH-BACK

THE passage of a Bill through Parliament is often a thorough-going education to those who pass it. Which means that sometimes, if they had known as much about the subject at the beginning as they do at the end of the long parliamentary procedure, they would not have passed the Bill at all, or at least would have passed it in a different form.

A case in point is the new legislation affecting the adoption of children which has now received the Royal Assent. Private Members' Bills travel under certain technical as well as tactical handicaps, which usually preclude the comprehensive treatment that a subject such as this really requires; and in fact what is needed is a Royal Commission followed by a consolidating Bill based on clear, accepted principles. Still, the present Bill does some useful tidying-up. It increases adopters' security by eliminating the child's born name from adoption orders. It enjoins a gap of twenty-one years between the age of adopter and adoptee unless they be blood-relatives. It permits the adoption of foreign children and endows them with British citizenship. It provides that local Welfare Officers shall be notified of intending adoptions. It makes general the rules which previous legislation laid down for registered adoption societies. And, most important of all, it relieves adopted children from some of the existing hazards of unintended disinheritance.

All these things were little controverted, though some of them provided plenty of technical difficulty. It was rather on the question of consent to adoption and revocation of consent that strong feeling was engaged and divided.

Four broad principles may be enunciated:

(1) that any differentiation of status, legal or otherwise, between adopted and other children should be minimised;

(2) that every care should be taken to ensure that natural mothers should not be induced or tempted to surrender their children for adoption if on balance they are likely to regret it subsequently; but that once it had been freely consented to, the act of adoption should be final;

(3) that the identity of natural parents and adopting parents should be strictly withheld from each other, unless both parties agree otherwise;

(4) and that in framing legislation the interest of the child should be paramount.

During the passage of the Bill, lip-service was piously paid to all four of these impeccable principles. But the debates disclosed that only the first was genuinely accepted. That is why the Clauses relating to consent became controversial.

There were two main issues. One of them was this. The Commons introduced and passed a Clause allowing a natural mother to give a "general consent" to the adoption of her child without specifying or enquiring into the identity, character or circumstances of the adopters. It was passed on the grounds that, if a mother was satisfied with the conscientiousness and responsibility of the adopting agency, whether a local authority or adoption society, there was not much sense in passing a law which compelled her to behave as though she were unsatisfied; and that, if a mother was indifferent to the fate of her child once she had got rid of it, no law could mitigate that indifference. But, most important of all, it was passed in pursuance of the third principle I have enumerated, namely, that an adoption based on general consent was the most secure of all, the most immune from the evil consequences which have been known to follow from the divulgence of adopters' identity.

The Lords, however, struck it out. It had already begun to appear that among the workers in and around the field of adoption there was a small, if vociferous, faction which was seeking not to facilitate but to encumber the procedure of adoption. For this faction, Lord Simon acted as eloquent spokesman. In opposing the Clause, the noble Lord managed to carry with him the handful of Peers who chanced to be in attendance by submerging them in a smoke-screen of involute, legalistic verbiage, only one phrase of which inadvertently disclosed the cloven hoof, when he warned them with impressive righteousness lest "the natural mother may in some cases be tempted recklessly to sign away her responsibilities without caring what happened. That is a bad thing all round and none of us would wish to encourage that sort of mother." Needless to say, he did not pause to explain how the deletion of this Clause could force "that sort of mother" to "care." But the implication was that, if general consent were permitted not specifically "in pursuance of an application" from some named or described adopter, then the maidens of England would promptly fling their inhibitions and their contraceptives out of the window and flood the country with the consequences. The idea that a girl's recklessness, though undeterred by moral compunction, social condemnation and the doleful prospect of nine months' bootless pregnancy and child-labour, would yet be deterred by the horrid thought of having to receive the name or description of adopters can, of course, be no more than a piece of special pleading.

Opposition to "general consent" is not, as it pretends to be, aimed at immorality. It is aimed at adoption. It is more likely to deter adopters than unmarried sexual intercourse. It may delay adoption, oblige the mother to keep her child longer than she wishes and prolong the period during which she can be dissuaded from taking the step at all. But these were not the avowed motives.

Similar *arrière pensées* vitiated the discussion on a practice that Ellen Wilkinson used to describe as "the snatch-back." The phrase refers to a Clause previously enacted which permits a natural mother to tear a child from its new home not merely within three months of installation there, but at any time up to the day when the adoption order is finally issued by the Courts. The tragic consequences of this system for both child and adopting parents are not hard to imagine. Not only psychologists but laymen who have any experience of the matter testify to the fact that the adopted child does almost immediately evoke precisely the same emotional response from an adopting couple as it would if it had been born to them. That fact, after all, is the reason why it is generally agreed that it is better for a child to be adopted than brought up in an institution or forced to remain with natural parents, one or both of whom for any reason would rather be rid of it. It follows, therefore, that the distress caused by the snatch-back is no less tragic than would be suffered by natural parents who were forcibly deprived of their children.

It is affirmed, too, by those with the greatest experience in the work that ninety-nine times out of a hundred the snatch-back operates to the detriment of the child as well. This is hardly surprising since, *prima facie*, those who go to the trouble to adopt presumably want children, whereas those who go to the trouble of having their children adopted presumably do not. It is true, of course, that cases can be cited where unmarried mothers would like to retain their children if only they were married, and that sometimes a belated marriage does occur which would have legitimatised the child and caused the mother to regret having surrendered it. But, after all, this change of circumstances is just as possible after the adoption order has been granted as before, and nobody suggests that the period of indecision should be prolonged beyond that point. Such cases are regrettable, but admittedly unavoidable.

It is true also that undue pressure can be sometimes brought upon unmarried mothers to consent to adoption, and that they are particularly susceptible to such pressure within the first few post-natal weeks. It is as well, therefore, that the Bill should have invalidated any consent given within six weeks of child-birth. But, conversely, great pressure is also often exercised upon unmarried mothers to revoke consent, a pressure exercised particularly by certain so-called "welfare workers" who regard a mother's responsibility for her illegitimate child as a fitting punishment for sin and are eager that she should not escape it. That may be good religious doctrine, though I hope it is not, but it certainly betrays a vicious callousness towards the welfare of children.

The abuses of the "probationary" period are manifold. Children can be snatched back not for their sake, not because the mother wants them, but as a lever with which to "high-pressure" recalcitrant fathers into marriage—or even into divorce from their existing wives. They have sometimes been brought back into homes where they are permanently resented as bastards by cuckolded husbands. They are sometimes even lodged in an adopter's home merely for the convenience of securing temporary board and lodging free, but with no genuine intention of eventual consent to adoption. They are sometimes brought back into unwelcoming homes by unwilling young mothers who have been pestered into it by anti-adoption doctrinaires. Yet, though it is a system which subjects both child and would-be adopters to an infinite variety of exploitation, the various circumscribing expedients proposed during the course of this Bill were all (save one) successfully obstructed.

Incidentally, an interesting by-product of the Bill has been to reveal that, although much attention has been very properly directed to the problem of the unwanted child, it is high time that some attention was given to the problem of the voluntary welfare worker. For a dangerous minority of frustrated women "charity work" can be a short-cut to personal power over their less fortunate fellows. In such hands unbefriended, young unmarried mothers are particularly helpless. If we were to set ourselves to devising reasonable safeguards, I do not doubt but that the great majority of decent folk working in these fields would be grateful. BENN W. LEVY

CHINESE COMMUNISTS

IV. The Pro-Russian Alignment

Mr. Dean Acheson has declared that "the Communist leaders have foresworn their Chinese heritage and have openly proclaimed their subservience to a foreign Power, Russia." Statements of this kind must be classed with the corresponding statements from the Communist side which denounce opponents of Russia as agents of American imperialism. Both belong to the realm of propaganda—"that branch of the art of lying which consists in very nearly deceiving your friends without quite deceiving your enemies." To say that the Chinese Communists are Russian agents may be effective publicity in America. But the Chinese press printed the full text of Mr. Acheson's letter because, in China, it was quite good pro-Communist propaganda. The exaggerated accusations against the Chinese Communist Party only served to discredit America. Certainly, the Chinese Communists do not think of themselves as Russian agents. The real question is: Why do men of undoubted intelligence and integrity adopt such an uncritical attitude to Russia and Russian propaganda?

In Chinese opinion, the strongest part of the case for Russia is the case against America. American policy in China has been the resultant of strongly conflicting forces. Its officially announced objectives have often been excellent, but, in practice, the dominant influence has been that of the doctrinaires who have subordinated every other principle to a blind opposition to any form of Communism. As the Chinese Communists see it, they went a long way in trying to show their readiness to co-operate with America and in accepting American mediation in hopes of avoiding the civil war, but met with complete bad faith from the American side. The complete discrediting of America in Chinese eyes has been the work of the group who might be called the Kuomintang fellow-travellers, whose attitude towards Chiang Kai-shek has been that of Communist fellow-travellers towards Stalin. In the summer of 1948, Representative Walter H. Judd, a "China expert" of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was still saying that Chiang Kai-shek was the greatest democratic statesman since Abraham Lincoln, and, in November 1949, General Wedemeyer was still "convinced of his desire to establish true democracy in China." This powerful group has made America appear in China as the consistent supporter of the most corrupt and reactionary forces in Chinese society.

On the positive pro-Russian side there are general statements of ideological solidarity and sympathy for the new regime, which mean much more to the theoretically minded Communists than they would to empirically minded Anglo-Saxons. There has been a certain amount of concrete help, such as trading and travel facilities when Communist China was otherwise completely blockaded, and the loan of technical experts. There is also a certain amount that needs to be explained away; but, to people who start with an inclination to put the best interpretation on Russian actions, the removal of Manchurian equipment and the occupation of Dairen and Port Arthur can plausibly be excused as a denial of their use to the Kuomintang. And it is widely believed that everything will be returned by the Russians.

If the Communists confined themselves to saying that the American Government had shown itself very clearly to be their enemy while there were grounds to hope for friendship and assistance from Russia, they would have an irrefutable case. In fact, of course, they go much further.

On the "doctrinaire" interpretation of Communism, the completely pro-Russian position is simply a deduction from Communist theory. And in some people this trust in pure theory goes very far. A description of Russian behaviour in Berlin produced the argument from one Chinese Communist theoretician that a study of writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin would show that such actions by a Socialist Power were impossible. It was considered that any suspicions of Russian imperialism were completely refuted by the argument: "Imperialism is the last stage of capitalism; Russia is not capitalist; therefore Russia cannot be imperialist." The numerous historical examples of non-capitalist empires are dismissed as irrelevant. The possibility of a Communist-ruled country using its power to exploit weaker communities was dismissed as wild speculation.

On the more "scientific" interpretation of Communism, the extreme pro-Russian position depends on entirely reasonable deductions from a picture of the world situation based mainly on Russian sources. The Russian theory of a world conflict between popular movements and the forces of reaction seems to fit Chinese experience. The argument in the American White Paper, that large-scale intervention in China was not tried only because it was "wholly impracticable," seems to confirm the Russian theory that only the certainty of defeat can deter the imperialists from the use of military force. It was believed that the people of the imperialist countries already sympathised with the Communist position and only needed encouragement to resist their reactionary governments. The more reasonable Communists would admit that Russian actions might sometimes be wrong, but felt that it was essential to demonstrate the complete determination and unity of the anti-imperialist front. Any signs of hesitation or disunity would encourage the imperialists to start another world war and would confuse and discourage popular resistance to imperialism. This view, that peace can only be preserved by a demonstration of anti-imperialist solidarity, explains both the denunciations of Tito and the vehemence and exactness with which Chinese Communist statements reproduce the international Communist line.

What is wrong with all this can be summed up in an often-quoted saying of Mao Tse-tung: "If you have not investigated you have no right to speak." It is understandable, in terms of their experiences in China, that the Chinese Communists should believe Russian sources to give the most reliable news on world affairs. But, because they have not investigated the reliability of these sources for European or American news, their reasoning is often based on very inaccurate data. Ideas about America or England are completely confused. People in the lower ranks of the party believe that only fear prevents the American workers from staging an immediate revolution under Communist leadership. Even responsible leaders believe that Henry Wallace is the real representative of the American people. Thinking is also confused by something rather like the British "old school tie" attitude towards other Communist Parties. There is great reluctance to admit that any Communist party could make really serious mistakes, or be so dogmatic and sectarian as to lack mass support.

It is probable that within the next few years the development of Sino-Soviet relations will provide a definite experimental test of Chinese Communist theories. At present any dangers to China of the pro-Russian alignment are largely hypothetical. If future Russian policy towards China follows the pattern expected by the Communists, then the pro-Russian alignment will have proved correct. So far there has been nothing in Russian actions which would definitely refute these expectations. The rumours about increasing Russian control of Manchuria which are common in foreign circles were not supported by Chinese informants who had been in Manchuria and had had contacts with the Communist organisation there. But what will happen if Russian policy follows the pattern set in Eastern Europe, if Russia increasingly demands that the Chinese Communist leaders should subordinate their views about the interests of the Chinese people to policies worked out in Moscow? If Russian policy were to develop in this way, a continuation of the uncritical pro-Russian alignment would probably mean the end of the present Chinese Communist leadership whom the Russians would find dangerously devoted to the Chinese people and dangerously independent in their thinking

At present the Chinese Communists consider the possibility of a dispute with Russia so fantastic that they will not discuss it even as a hypothetical question. But anyone who has doubts about the official Russian description of events in Eastern Europe must consider at least the possibility of such developments. In such a conflict the real "doctrinaires" would probably manage to persuade themselves that any Russian demands were somehow in the interests of the Chinese people, but many people in the Communist Party would remain loyal to the Chinese people rather than to the Russian Government. The outcome of such a hypothetical conflict would depend considerably on the policies of the Western Powers. Under continued threat from the West most Communists would feel that domination by Russia was a lesser evil. If China ever becomes a Russian dependency, the best assistants of Russian imperialism will, as usual, have been the doctrinaire anti-Communists.

Michael Lindsay

THE VILLAGE—II

The nineteenth century dealt harshly with the English village and the changes it wrought were great and destructive. First came the Enclosures, which reduced the land-occupying peasantry to landless labourers. Then the factories destroyed the local industries and crafts which had added so greatly to the wealth and variety of rural life. And finally, beginning in the later '70s, the great depression struck at the one remaining industry of the countryside, agriculture, lowering alike the standards, the purpose and the hopes of landlord, farmer and labourer. Thus did the village degenerate into the closed, limited, almost ghetto-like community of Later Victorian and Edwardian times which Haggard and others have described with such painful insight. Geoffrey Garratt, for instance, casting his mind back to the Midland village he knew so well in the early 1900's, wrote: "At that time, the average villager's life was bounded in on every side. Work, sex, drink, parentage, quarrelling and scandal made up nearly all their interests. Few of the Oxfordshire villagers had seen the sea, most of those with whom I lived had never travelled by train, and many lived and died without going five miles from their homes. The only entertainment during the year was a concert, arranged by the 'gentry.' As a performer, I can vouch for its exceeding badness. Dancing was unknown and many villagers, even in a small hamlet, hardly saw each other from year's end to year's end. The idea that the village should run any-

thing, a cricket team or a dance, without assistance from the 'gentry' would have seemed absurd. The narrow, closed circle of their minds did not encourage co-operation." Garratt was a thoughtful observer and the village he described was typical.

Since then there have been many changes. The bicycle, the bus, two wars, the coming of half-holidays, all have combined to break the hard, closed circle of a fifty years ago. Further, shorter hours on the land and the coming of mechanisation have reduced the physical strain on the individual so that the sullen, "dummel" men of the *Toilers of the Fields* have now passed away. Village life to-day, therefore, is freer and more spacious, with more leisure and more entertainment; dances and games are more common; and there is more intercourse between villages. Garratt, writing twenty years ago, summarised the change in the mail which lay before him, three letters from the secretaries of the village cricket, tennis and bowls clubs, pointing out that his subscription was due.

All these things, of course, have been purchased at a price; indeed, this whole question of the "Good Old Times" is interesting. It is surely beyond doubt that by any material standard the villager is far better off than he was forty or fifty years ago. Yet, on the other hand, when every allowance has been made for the *laudator temporis acti*, it does seem clear that the older generation extracted from their hard, narrow lives certain satisfactions which their children miss, while work unquestionably absorbed not merely more of their time and energies but also more of their interests. But the change has come and is now established, psychologically as well as mechanically; there can be no reversion. And an interesting sign and symbol of this is, surely, the decay of folk-lore. The subject is difficult and the evidence obscure, yet there can be little doubt that in our own time many of the ancient legends and traditions, preserved if not necessarily believed well within living memory, have weakened and faded. There are very few people under, say, 60 to-day who have seen the Mummers or the Horkey Ceremony, and it is significant that even in East Anglia, always a stronghold of Old England, wart charmers and wise women, common a generation ago, are now almost unknown. There is matter for regret in this, for we are losing something of our past, something that survived the Conversion, the Black Death and the Enclosures, and which can never, never be replaced. Our children will be the poorer for it. But the lesson is clear; the village is no longer looking inwards for its culture.

Yet mobility, the gift of the twentieth century to the village, has not redeemed the bitter legacy of the Victorian Age. The labourer, for instance, is still a labourer; his conditions have improved but his status has not changed. Neither has there been any revival of the old crafts and rural industries which so enriched village society and the village economy till the factory-system swept them away. A few, of course, survive and they have been joined in recent years by such newcomers as the cement works and the sugar-beet factory. But these in no way make good the general loss, on the contrary they emphasise and illustrate it. Consider, for instance, the social and economic effects of the establishment in 1927 of a small milk-processing factory in a Devonshire village. This has meant new blood and new wealth, new houses, better services and amenities, a noticeable improvement in dress and, incidentally, a higher standard of milk-production on the local farms. A minor but typical point is the fortnight's holiday with pay which the factory gives its employees, so that a holiday away from the village, formerly almost unknown, has now become a normal possibility. To modern eyes this village is exceptional, yet it represents the true tradition of English rural life. For this idea of the village as a purely agricultural community is a heresy recent in origin and deplorable in its consequences. One of the great weaknesses of the modern rural community is its dependence on one industry, farming. One of its great needs is the revival or replacement of its ancient trades, crafts and industries. And of that there is little sign.

Neither has the agricultural revival of the last decade restored the traditional social structure of the village. The squire, for instance, may survive as an individual or even as an influence but hardly as an institution. Too much of his land and wealth have gone from him and the development of local government has dwarfed his power as a magistrate. It is sometimes argued that the tendency for rich or retired people to settle in the country may fill this gap. But the treasure, and therefore the heart, of the wealthy man will not be in the village and even his body will probably only be there at irregular intervals while the elderly in many cases "do not so much live in the country as die there as slowly and economically as possible." Indeed, such newcomers can be destructive, witness certain famous villages which only need smocks and maypoles to complete the illusion. These villages look too good to be true; they *are* too good to be true, for the average income probably runs into four figures. The cuckoo from the towns has settled there and the poor country fledglings have sought homes elsewhere.

The parson, too, is more prominent in the mythological than in the real village. For, apart from any generalities about "the decline in institutional religion," the country clergyman suffers peculiar disadvantages. Today he is generally town-bred and town-trained, so does not always find Old England an easy parish, while he seldom enjoys the knowledge and influence which came so easily to the masters of large households in the old days. Further, he often serves the churches of amalgamated parishes but he can only live in one and, in a society still localised to an extent hardly conceivable by the townsman, this tends to weaken his influence in the others. Modern developments in doctrine and ritual, too, do not invariably harmonise with the traditions of country parishoners and not all villagers are as cheerfully broad-minded as the labourer quoted by Robertson-Scott: "Ole passun, 'e do antic. But us likes ole passun and us antics along of 'e."

Neither has the parson's loss of influence been replaced by that relative newcomer to the village, the schoolmaster. He is, it is true, a most important public character and in many ways his contact with the villagers is closer and more intimate than that of the clergyman. His standard of living and outlook is generally nearer theirs, he can be "heartier" than the parson and his influence continues naturally from school to after life. But his position, too, has degenerated. He has often been replaced by a schoolmistress whose influence is subtly weaker; she cannot, for instance, organise sports, preside at meetings or advise parents in quite the same way as a man. And in many cases he has gone altogether. The best modern survey of village life quotes a parson as saying that "the *Hadow Report* has been the ruin of half the villages in England," and the educational benefits of the reforms which followed this Report too often cost the village one of its most valuable members. The price paid by the village for general progress continues to be heavy.

Indeed, the urban mythology which has developed in so curious fashion round rural reality is a treacherous guide to the modern village. Those who seek by its aid to discover things as they are will find it a shoddy and dangerous tool. For this Christmas Calendar Concept of the village with which we are all familiar is primarily an idealised memory of the village of fifty years ago. We are, therefore, greatly in error if we assume that it represents the normal and traditional pattern of English rural life; on the contrary, it was no more than the stripped and impoverished relics of the historic village community. We are also greatly in error if we assume that it represents the village today; on the contrary, there have been many changes in the last half-century, some obvious, some subtle, nearly all important. For the village is not a collection of buildings inherited from the picturesque past; it is a community of men and women living and working in the modern world.

NIGEL HARVEY

THE STORY OF KRISKARDS

[*In response to many requests from our readers, we have made special arrangements to reprint the following extract from the broadcast by Professor Clifford Wall, which attracted much attention when it was first delivered in the B.B.C. Fifth Programme on December 16, 1989.*]

. . . Now, if you look closely at the cards you are sending to your friends, you will notice, in small type, beneath the space for your signature, the words: "GUAR. GEN." Have you ever wondered why they are there? A whole chapter of social history lies in these two words.

Forty years ago, stationers' shops used to display a profusion of Christmas cards, as they were then called. These cards bore coloured illustrations of such scenes as an old-fashioned inn, snow-bound stage-coach, or "Bringing Home the Yule Log." Their atmosphere appeared romantic to an industrial population in the bleak, Crippsian era. But the prices constituted a social problem. High-class cards for a score of friends would cost a quarter of a workingman's weekly wage; and social snobbery deterred the even more impecunious professional class from purchasing cheaper cards.

This problem of which to lose—Face or Money—was solved by an obscure genius: he simply wrote his own name beneath the original signature on cards received from his acquaintances, and then dispatched the second-hand cards. Others imitated him. Soon it was considered bad form to send a "bought one"; rapidly the expensive snobbery of brand-new Christmas cards died out. People's Christmas post became the occasion for an intriguing social inquisition: "The Tringleys appear to know a person named Buggins"; or, "I see that the Cheyne-Sprocketts have sent a card from the Bishop of Barnstaple."

To replenish the supply of used cards, there arose the firm of Kriskards, Ltd. They employed a large clerical staff to sign the cards with everyday names from telephone directories; and they also engaged—at a higher, part-time salary—persons of some consequence in the spheres of drama, films or sport, to write their own signatures. Illustrations were omitted from the cards, as being irrelevant. Beneath the conventional greeting extended a large space for the signatures, followed by the words, "GUAR. GEN." (or "Guaranteed Genuine"). The last process of manufacture was the Soiling Department,

where the cards were provided with artificial smudges and creases; for no one wished it to be thought that he was a social pariah, reduced to buying first-hand cards.

Kriskards were priced according to quality, in such varieties as "Ordinary" or "Directory" cards, "Film-stars," "Footballers," and "Assorted Specials." Popular family lines were "Bishops," and "Peers of the Realm." One did not expect the senders of aristocratically signed Kriskards to be acquainted with their signatories—any more than one believed the pearls, worn by a working-class girl, to be genuine. It was merely a polite fiction. In the annual exchange, friends vied with one another to send the most impressive signatures. The enterprise of Kriskards was rewarded by a soaring turnover which more than justified the flotation of their large bond issue in 1965.

Kriskards, Ltd., had now monopolised the market. Public apprehension, indeed, began to be caused by the number of film-stars and professional sportsmen who decided to retire in order to devote their art entirely to Kriskards. The "ABC" strike of 1969, by Admirals, Bishops and Courtesan, was due to a threatened reduction of their emoluments, in consideration of their part-time earnings from Kriskard-signing. With the special issue of Papal cards in 1970, Kriskards, Ltd., reached their peak.

The use of non-commercial signatures, at first the practice of the old-fashioned, later became of interest to collectors. Kriskartery bid fair to rival philately; and *The Kriskartist* carried such advertisements as "Non-com. duchess. What offers?" The value of a "non-com." card depended on the fluctuating popularity of its three or four signatories; for example, there was a sharp rise in "Priestley's" during the production of his hundredth play, in 1971. Forgers (or "card-sharpers") naturally profited by this market—as appeared in the notorious case of Godden *v.* Kriskards, Ltd. This was carried, on appeal, to the House of Lords; the judgment involved the market value of an Archbishop, a Peeress—and the Lord Chancellor himself.

Eventually, the cost of Kriskards became an annual source of anxiety to the public; for in the seventies, when Kriskards, Ltd., had monopolised the market, the inflation which followed the adoption of the devalued dollar as British currency led to an abrupt rise in the price of cards. Yet the imperative obligation remained to circulate Kriskards; for did not advertisements depict the Social Plight of the Pariah who forgot to Purchase his Kriskards?

The situation was saved by the unconventional action of a Mr. (now Baron) Glubb. In desperation, he dispatched cards bearing only his own signature, but embellished with water-colour sketches by his daughter, Winnie, who would depict scenes from her history book—Life in Olden Times; Bringing in the Yule Log; the Stage-coach; the Village Chimes. For Winnie thought that life in those far-off days must have been wonderfully romantic.

Mr. Glubb began to sell these cards to impecunious and equally heretical friends. He was building up a brisk trade at cut prices, when Kriskards, Ltd., always ready to assist humble talent, purchased the business from him. They incorporated the coloured illustrations in their issue of Kriskards, and omitted the ready-made signatures—thus showing themselves to be true servants of the Public's wishes. The colour process naturally involved a slight increase in their prices, and the Stock Exchange quotation for their Ordinary shares touched next year a new "high."

So my little romance of a social custom reaches its conclusion. I hope that you will think of it, this Christmastide, when purchasing your gaily coloured Kriskards. And that you will not grudge the price of the card when you read, below the space for your signature, the words, "GUAR. GEN."; and call to mind the very interesting story which lies behind them. Goodnight. . . .

SO THEY SAY . . .

WHILE not appearing to have made a special effort to be diverting, the daily press has provided during the pre-Christmas period a wide selection of holiday reading.

Perfidious Albion

Daily Mail, December 12:

> Now the British people are the only so-called free nation on earth who are still burdened, restricted, and harassed by a rigid system which kills liberty and enterprise. . . .

Daily Express, December 8:

> For consider the facts . . . Britain has never been so busy as she is to-day. She has never been a more vigorous manufacturing centre. She has never been such a good "risk," never so able to take pride in her own power and achievements. . . .

Great Expectations

Daily Telegraph, December 12:

> AUSTRALIAN ELECTION FILLIP FOR MARKETS

The Times, December 13:

> . . . there was no sign of any enthusiastic reaction in stock markets to the decisive electoral victory . . . in Australia . . .

By Arrangement With . . .

Evening Standard, December 9:

> The Coal Board's sally into the realms of stage censorship has provided a handsome, if unsolicited, gift to the Adelphi box-office. *Castle In The Air* . . . opened in a blaze of publicity which must have made every rival theatre management green with envy . . . Author Alan Melville, manager Stanley French, and actor Jack Buchanan are all grateful to the benevolent N.C.B. . . .

Sunday Express, December 11:

> Questions I would like to have answered about the Coal Board criticisms which put . . . *Castle In The Air* on every front page:—Why were the complaints . . . not made earlier during the 11 weeks' provincial tour? Why were the complaints dropped so suddenly like a lump of hot coal? . . . I 'phoned Mr. Pullin [N.C.B. public relations officer who complained at the first night] to put some of these questions to him. But there were difficulties because he dropped the 'phone . . . Mr. Pullin, formerly a theatre correspondent of an evening paper, did tell me, however, that he was a close friend of Mr. Stanley French, who presents the play. Their friendship remains as close as ever. . . .

Someone Should Tell Him

Illustrated, December 17:

> THE BOY WITH A BATON
>
> It seems curious that [10-year-old Roberto Benzi] has seen very few contemporary conductors on the platform—apart from Cripps and Feuchtwanger. . . . At present he seems almost unaware of what it is all about . . .

So, possibly, are Krips, the financial wizard, and Furtwangler, the eminent novelist.

Promise

Daily Express, December 14:

> Already 50,000 TV sets have been sold in the Midlands. . . .

Daily Graphic, December 14:

> . . . of the 60,000 sets sent to these areas only 6,160 have so far been sold. . . .

. . . and Performance

Sunday Times, December 18

> Colwyn Bay (100 miles from Sutton Coldfield): Slight unsteadiness at the start. Later the picture became crystal clear and revealed the gap between the two upper front teeth of Mr. Paling, the Postmaster-General. . . .

AUTOLYCUS

A BOX OF MATCHES

THERE were no cells in the transit camp. In the permanent camp, Oflag XIIB, a mile away, there was one cell which was in fairly regular use. In the days when the big stone pseudo-Gothic building, now housing all the prisoners, had been a school, the cell had been a lumber room. It was a small stone-walled room, half below ground level; its window, high in the wall if you were inside, was just above the path that ran round the building.

All the prisoners had been together at least since the Italian armistice, and many since Dunkirk. When they could no longer stand their room-mates, or wanted to do some quiet work—Oflag XIIB produced a Russian grammar and a standard work on fly-fishing—they took turns to commit minor offences for which the punishment was seven days solitary. They were not pleased when I moved into the cell for an indefinite stay. Because of a rather foolish argument with a German officer, I was to be tried under civil law for insulting the nation and the Führer. This trial was repeatedly postponed and in fact never came off—for one reason because the Rathaus, containing my act of accusation, was destroyed in an air-raid. So my prolonged stay in the cell was an inconvenience to the other prisoners, who were forced, as it were, to postpone their holidays.

They were very nice about it. I was allowed books, and the librarian kept me well supplied, though he had more taste than tact and one early selection was Dostoevsky's *The House of the Dead*. The chief Intelligence officer, or master-mind of the camp underground, also did his best to help. He was, I later found, an Egyptian Greek of British nationality; he had a Budienny moustache which he shaved off on the day of liberation; he wore a Sam Browne belt over a pullover, but no jacket; and his talent was for mysterious intrigue.

Twice a day, a British private, employed as camp orderly, pushed a wheelbarrow full of rubbish past my window. Out of the side of his mouth he gave me snippets of news, brief and enigmatic, but complete with the universal present participle. One day he said (going): "—ing Germans making a push," and (coming back): "—ing Greeks shooting each other." Thus I was told of the Ardennes offensive and the Greek civil war. But one day he said: "—ing note behind the bog seat."

I found the note on my next visit to the lavatory. It was from the Greek conspirator, and it was the first of a series which grew more and more exasperating. For whereas I wanted playing-cards, razor-blades, accurate news and, above all, smokes, the Greek wanted to indulge his flair for melodrama. Only much later could I enjoy the flavour of those carefully folded notes, written with a 4H pencil on typing paper: "Hold on, we are busy" . . . "Your friends are with you" . . . "Walk carefully and you will have good news soon."

Sometimes I had a fire in my cell. There was a coke-burning stove, and Vigelius, a wizened German corporal who looked after the camp heating system, would bring in a load of coke and

light it. This happened about one day in ten. Officially I was allowed no coke at all, and I was dependent on the temper, naturally morose, of Vigelius, and on the news from the front, to which he was very responsive. I had no fires at all during the dark period of Bastogne. By the end, I had a fire every other day; but by then it wasn't so cold. When there was no fire I shivered, wrapped in blankets. When there was one, the little cell became furnace-like, and I sat by the window without a shirt.

But this was not the real importance of the fire. After a few weeks with no smokes at all, I suddenly found myself wallowing in them. The Greek yielded to appeals and smuggled in a couple of packets; he had suddenly seen their possibilities, and written messages in serial form along the cigarettes. The orderly left some on the window-sill; and the German authorities, after some argument, conceded that I was entitled to my ration, including arrears—fifty cigarettes from Red Cross parcels, and over a hundred Gauloises from the issue provided, under the Geneva Convention, by the "detaining Power." I was even given pipe-cleaners, and I used to break up the Gauloises butts and smoke them in my pipe. In fact, I had everything—except matches. Only when Vigelius gave me a fire could I smoke. And Rundstedt was driving on Liège.

It was a smoker's idea of hell. I sat all day alone in a small room, so sparsely furnished that I could not hide from myself the presence of a lavish supply of cigarettes; and I had no matches. I tried everything. I begged Vigelius for the matches with which he lit the boiler. But he used only one a day, lighting my fire, if he gave me one, with a spill. I tried all sorts of tactics on the guards who brought my food. Sometimes I pleaded, sometimes I reasoned, sometimes I tried to take them by surprise; sticking a cigarette absently in my mouth and offering the packet, I would ask casually, "*Haben Sie Feuer?*" I wrote urgent notes to the Greek, threatening that without matches all (I did not say what "all") would be lost. I button-holed the German officers as they passed my window going to roll-call. I wrote to the Commandant, accusing him of inhumanity and war crimes. All was in vain.

To tell the truth, I was thoroughly mean and unfair. Nobody had any matches to spare—neither the Greek, though he would have died rather than admit it, nor the guards, nor the Commandant, nor anyone in Germany. Matches were even scarcer than they had been two years earlier in England; and, as bombing destroyed communications, they virtually vanished. You could see German officers, cigar in mouth, puffing despairingly after the distant shape of a smoker, or wandering in search of the one Oberleutnant who had a lighter. It wasn't surprising that nobody wanted to spare a box of matches for a prisoner in "solitary" for insulting the nation and the Führer.

On Christmas Day, the clear air carried the sound of the bells from the village church. Vigelius, forgetting the news, gave me a crooked smile and lit the stove. Recklessly, he used a match for it. It flickered. Putting his matchbox on the edge of the bed, he bent down to poke and puff. The fire caught. Forgetting his matchbox, Vigelius left the cell and bolted the door. I could hardly believe my luck. I didn't pick up the matches, but just stared at them, gloating over the moment when I should put them in my pocket, calculating how I should divide them, how many I should use in a day, how many cigarettes I should chain-smoke for one match. Before I had moved, the bolt slid back and Vigelius came into the cell again. "I forgot my matches," he grunted.

I didn't dare speak. I held my breath. Outside, the bells were pealing noisily. We could just hear the cries of children on the toboggan-slide between the camp and the village. Upstairs, the morning service was beginning with the boom and thump of an all-male, "O Come All ye Faithful."

Vigelius turned to the door. I just caught his embarrassed mumble: "My mistake. Must have left them in my coat."

MERVYN JONES

The Arts and Entertainment

FRENCH LANDSCAPE

THE winter exhibition at Burlington House—*Landscape in French Art*—is in the great tradition of its predecessors, and the Royal Academy, The Arts Council and the *Direction des Relations Culturelles* deserve full credit for having brought together a magnificent display. Few of the works are over-familiar and the exhibition seldom falls below the high standard set by the first rooms. Every gallery contains a number of superb pictures, while the display of drawings is an important exhibition in itself. It was, furthermore, an excellent idea to include tapestries—the fourteenth-century hunting scenes from Hardwick, a selection of the *Months* or *Royal Chateaux* woven for Louis XIV after designs by Lebrun, and the decorative set of *chinoiserie* caprices after designs by Boucher—for they reveal the treatment of landscape in a parallel art-form.

Before the nineteenth century there was no stylistic development in landscape painting. Artists looked at nature in a variety of ways and to each treatment it is possible to attach an arbitrary label. Nor is it easy to define the essentially French contribution to the art, for successive generations of French artists reacted to different outside influences: to the Italian in the seventeenth century, to the Flemish then the Dutch in the eighteenth, and to the English and the Dutch in the nineteenth. Yet there are indigenous traits which form the basis of the French landscape tradition and these emerge in this show. No obvious thread links Fouquet (an important absentee), the seventeenth-century mannerists, Claude and Poussin with later schools, yet everything that had preceded was gloriously fused at the beginning of the nineteenth century when landscape suddenly became the principal subject-matter of art. Only after Corot is it possible to follow for some 75 years a continuous line of stylistic evolution. Any display of French landscapes must therefore cover the years 1830-60 especially well. But unfortunately during this crucial period the present exhibition is weak.

In a sense this exhibition is bottom-heavy. Of course Claude and Poussin as two of the greatest French masters are, as they should be, represented by a magnificent array of works—twenty-six paintings and sixty-four drawings by Claude, sixteen superb oils and five drawings by Poussin. With one exception all these works come from English collections. But the very fact that both these artists were so popular with English collectors has tended to falsify the picture of seventeenth-century French landscape. Gaspard, Bourdon and Millet are there in quantity. But one misses the more realistic painters—Louis Le Nain for example. Had the rest of the exhibition been keyed up to this early *embarras de richesses* one would not mind. As it is, too much that follows is coloured by one's memories of these early rooms, often alas unfavourably. Yet one welcomes the magnificence of these three galleries (II, III and IV), for it has probably never before been possible to make so thorough a study of Claude and Poussin's respective styles, since many of these works have never been previously exhibited. Both made drawings directly from nature and drew upon these for their finished paintings; both approached nature unselfconsciously (these studies were made for themselves alone); both achieved effects of great complexity with the most economical means, and in these sketches their style is remarkably similar. Yet how different are their finished works! For where Poussin constructed an idealised form of landscape out of a number of details naturally observed and ingeniously built up into a set-piece, Claude saw nature whole in an all-embracing glance. His supreme pastorals, at first sight so simple and guileless, yet already full of light, atmosphere and naturalism, anticipated the Impressionists by two hundred years.

The eighteenth century also is superbly represented in the field of drawings. By then reality had been left behind. Far from being literal notes, chalk sketches by Fragonard and Lancret were mostly ends in themselves, deliberately worked up into marketable *objets d'art* in the same idiom as paintings. Only recently Sir Kenneth Clark referred to this century as "the winter of the imagination." How unjust this comment is appears when we look at the Potsdam version of Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera*—surely a supremely imaginative picture, lyrical yet disturbing, a perfect crystallisation of its epoch, yet an unaccountably sad, almost prophetic work full of foreboding. How different in conception was French landscape painting from English at this date! For where the English adopted the Picturesque and paid little attention to Man in relation to Nature, the French turned to landscapes in a Rubensesque idiom, and created romantic décors, in which they set exquisite and nostalgic scenes of gallantry—fêtes, picnics, musical parties, rustic games. At the same time both countries produced a number of interesting topographical artists. Hubert Robert, a particularly happy exponent of this in France, is well shown at Burlington House. Quite early in the eighteenth century one discovers presentiments of how landscape was to develop later. Four small sketches by Desportes painted before 1720 (Nos. 129 and 130, 133 and 134), two pictures by Houel (Nos. 117 and 123), and a pair by Moreau L'Aîné (Nos. 152 and 159) lead straight up to Corot's elegiac vision. Also in the works of Georges Michel one sees the strong Dutch influence (first evident in Fragonard, e.g., No. 128) which eventually came to fruition in painting by the Barbizon school.

The developments of nineteenth-century French landscape have a well-defined sequence—early years, Corot, the Barbizon school, Courbet, the Impressionists, and lastly the Neo-Impressionists. The early years are barely represented. David's *View of the Luxembourg Gardens* was shown in London last year and is therefore absent; but why are Baron Gros and his military academy, Horace Vernet, Lami and Isabey missing? Géricault is represented by a single and dubious picture (627); Delacroix by a seascape of equally doubtful authorship, by two small watercolours and three paintings which are certainly not landscapes. On the other hand, Corot is numerically strong and is represented by some magnificent early paintings—the *View of Avignon* (180), the Barber Institute's *Fisherman* (147) among them, and some fine drawings. Yet a plethora of small works and substantial horrors do not do justice to one of the greatest of all landscapists. Furthermore, we find several good examples by a number of diverse minor figures, near Impressionists and fellow travellers, haphazardly labelled *Naturalists;* but the established academics, for instance Rosa Bonheur, Meissonier, Bastien-Lepage, Gustave Moreau as well as Gustave Doré, are omitted, though no panorama of the century is complete without them. Certainly there are some superb Courbets, notably

The Rocks at Freyr (214) and *Deer in a Glade* (216); in these a feeling for light and atmosphere anticipates the best of Impressionism, yet with a bite belonging to Courbet alone. Otherwise, this pivot of the nineteenth century does not appear in his full vigorous stature.

Because of understandable national favouritism the Impressionists are present in great force. Two galleries shimmer with their beautiful airy paintings—the peak of *belle peinture*, not the beginning of a new tradition. It is sheer unrestrained visual pleasure that one derives from looking at their finest works—Sisley's *Molesey Weir* (253), Monet's *Snow Scene at Argenteuil* (237) or *Westminster* (229), Manet's *Seine at Argenteuil* (247).

And although this exhibition does not adequately illustrate the last days of Impressionism, and Degas' landscapes, both pastel and monotype, are entirely passed over, we must be grateful for the opportunity of seeing good work by a number of the lesser men, Guillaumin, Vignon and Bazille (who was unfortunately killed during the Franco-Prussian war). Neo-Impressionism is suggested by the presence of Signac, Cross and Luce. The exhibition closes with a wall of Gauguin, some Seurats and a display of very beautiful, if for the most part familiar, Cézannes (though the inclusion of No. 628 is not convincingly justified). The Cézannes and Seurats echo the scientific rhythms of the Poussins at a distance of two hundred years. Medieval minds were preoccupied with the Other World; Renaissance men turned to the World Around, as did subsequent generations until the end of the nineteenth century, when Nature as subject matter had become drained. Now many of our contemporaries are obsessed with technicalities and problems. Nostalgically and with heightened pleasure one looks back to the works which Nature inspired.

JOHN RICHARDSON

FALSTAFF AND LOHENGRIN

THE two operas newly produced last week could not have been more sharply contrasted. At Sadler's Wells we had the swiftest, subtlest and most genial of comedies, at Covent Garden the slowest and heaviest of romantic operas. Not that the final masterpiece of Verdi's maturity can be satisfactorily compared with a transitional work that no one would rank with the best of Wagner. But there is food for thought in the juxtaposition of any two works by that strangely assorted pair of geniuses whom providence economically brought into the world in the same year. Although they began at the same point in time and shared much of the same heritage (German opera had only just seceded from the cosmopolitan Italian stock), their points of contact are negligible. Like the sections of the amphisbaena which Thomasina snipped irretrievably in two, they ran away in opposite directions—the one towards symphony, the other towards a Shakespearian drama of character—and gave operatic audiences such a squint that only recently have the same people been able to appreciate both. It is still necessary to discount the strong ethical reverence with which many people, and not only his compatriots, approach Wagner. An ethical *Falstaff* is an impossible thought; but is an ethical *Lohengrin* artistically any more to the point? Wagner's symbolism, muddled in *The Ring*, does not bear examination in *Lohengrin*, which lacks the compensation of a fully developed symphonic tissue in the orchestra and lumbers along at a monotonous 4/4 Andante in short square phrases as exasperating as a recurring decimal. Its historical importance is great, but it sags limply between the two stools of Weberian romantic opera and symphonic music drama. One of these stools has recently been brought back to view from wartime storage, but what about the other? All Wagner's advances in *Lohengrin*, which led straight to *The Ring*, are anticipated by Weber in *Euryanthe*, an opera of infinitely superior invention and dramatic power.

The Sadler's Wells *Falstaff* is uneven. Both conductor (Michael Mudie) and producer (Tyrone Guthrie) endeavour to re-adapt this profoundly Italian opera to the rude vigours of Elizabethan England, with certain unhappy results on the music and the dramatic illusion. Verdi's score is so full of fascinating detail that it can withstand the slower tempo in which Mr. Mudie takes a good deal of the garden and buckbasket scenes, but the sudden changes to full speed ahead create a disconcertingly jerky, piecemeal impression. The defects of production, especially in the last act, are more serious. The rise of the curtain in Act. III discovers a sneezing Falstaff with his feet in a basin and a large bath-towel completely covering his head (Verdi's stage direction is "Falstaff sitting in an armchair, meditating"). The audience naturally take this as an invitation to laugh at everything, and the wonderful pathos and poetry of this scene go by the board. The ruin is completed by some comic business for Ford and Dr. Caius at the end, where Verdi is particularly careful to ensure that the stage should be quite empty when the curtain falls, as indeed the music implies. Verdi had a profound knowledge of the stage; his directions should never be disobeyed without the strongest reason. In the final scene, too, attention is distracted from Nannetta's lovely song by some ungainly "rehearsing" of the fairies. The magic of this scene should compel us to accept them for the moment as real fairies and not the schoolchildren of Windsor dressed up as a joke. It cannot be too often emphasised that the Falstaff of Boito and Verdi is not the dummy of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, but something between the hero of *Henry IV* and a highly subtilised Italian *buffo* bass. This production gave to Falstaff's sudden cry of recognition "O Master Brook!" a startling topical significance. It is only fair to add that Mr. Guthrie made the action of the last scene, especially the wedding episode, far clearer than usual; and Mistress Quickly's entry on a broomstick was triumphantly in place.

The ensemble work, so important in this opera, was good, despite a failure in the difficult finale of the garden scene. The Falstaff of Mr. Arnold Matters had wit, dignity and understanding; with a little more vocal power and variety it would dominate the opera as it should. Mr. Roderick Jones, after a nervous start, put plenty of passion into Ford's great monologue. There was a charming Nannetta (Miss Elsie Morison) and a good if not quite sufficiently lyrical Mistress Ford (Miss Marion Lowe). Miss Olwen Price missed some of the rich flavour of Mistress Quickly. As directed in the score, she should execute a deep curtsey at every appearance of her "Reverenza!" (rendered as "O your worship!" in Mr. Proctor-Gregg's excellent translation). The musical phrase breathes the very spirit of genuflexion; and a repetition of gesture as well as of music is far more amusing than a gradation from no gesture at all to a final orgy of grovelling. Mr. Reece Pemberton's designs also varied in quality. There was an admirable set for the buckbasket scene, but Fenton was hampered by a most unbecoming hat and Dr. Caius by a remarkable garment something between a bath-robe and a scholastic gown. Were even French physicians as eccentrically dressed as this?

But if the nimble destroyer steered erratically the old battle-cruiser kept a remarkably steady course. There may have been nothing of supreme excellence about the production, singing and orchestral playing in *Lohengrin*, but lapses and distractions were few, and the level performance gave a very fair idea of the work. Particular credit is due to Otto Erhardt, a producer content to listen to the music and do his work unobtrusively. His groupings were conspicuously successful; and the chorus, freed from any resemblance to either an oratorio phalanx at a charade party or a half-trained *corps de ballet*, put the utmost conviction into their singing. Even the stage trumpeters did not look as if they had hopped up from the orchestra pit. One small grumble: Wagner's stage fights nearly always come as an anticlimax, but could not Dr. Erhardt

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have devised something a little less like a street-corner push for the duel in Act I? Miss Sylvia Fisher made Elsa a human and touching figure by vocal quality alone. Mr. Franz Lechleitner, handicapped by the English language, was less successful as Lohengrin, a pretty sorry hero at the best of times; but at least he convinced us that he was a knight of the Grail and not an advertisement for the haulage capacity of medieval swans. Mr. Norman Walker, required to impersonate regal middle age without becoming an intolerable bore, did it very well. As so often happens, Wagner endowed his evil-doers with more vitality than his heroes, and Mr. Tom Williams and Miss Edith Coates took their chances well. Miss Coates, indeed, chased round the stage by a green spotlight, put so much dramatic passion into her rendering of Ortrud that an occasional forcing of the tone could be forgiven. And now let Dr. Rankl and the other authorities explore romantic opera in its prime and give us *Euryanthe* or *Oberon*.

WINTON DEAN

RADIO NOTES

THE B.B.C. is more and more providing out-relief for the academic classes, and among the innumerable dons whom a first-class ticket wafts happily towards its portals, many, it is to be suspected, thereafter make their way along whatever bleak corridor leads to the small back room. Among these is Professor Gibberne. He must be an old man by now, since H. G. Wells informs us that his portrait appeared in *The Strand Magazine* as far back as 1899. Yet his assistance is indispensable. The celebrated B Syrup (which long ago had already saved more lives than any lifeboat round the coast) is regularly employed in those states of extreme exhaustion which follow upon any individual's attempt to hold the air for more than twenty minutes on end. And even more widely used is his greatest discovery, the New Accelerator.

At times, indeed, it would seem hardly extravagant to say that the B.B.C. *is* the New Accelerator. When Ibsen's *Brand* was produced in Christiania in 1885 a crowded house sat through a performance lasting from 6.30 to 1.15; last week the Third Programme presented a "radio adaptation" of a "new stage version" in two hours and fifteen minutes. For those with an informed interest in a dramatic poem having some claims to be the *Faust* of Scandinavia, J. L. Forsyth's heroic endeavour to feed the radio public Brand's Essence in this way may have been, for all I know, scarifying and outrageous. My own impression was that a work often formidably tedious in the reading had been brought wonderfully alive, although I suspected that this was due less to any marked virtue in the new translation than to the excellence of a cast headed by Ralph Richardson, Sybil Thorndike and Margaret Leighton.

When I saw that T. S. Eliot's recorded reading of *The Waste Land* was timed to take thirty minutes I thought that the Accelerator would again have to be put in requisition. But this was of course a mistaken impression. Mr. Eliot got through the poem's 433 lines easily, with nothing missing except the word "behind" in 1. 81 (for this he substituted, whether inadvertently or not, "beneath"). It is surely a matter of perpetual astonishment that a poem by the side of which *Faust* itself (let alone *Brand*) is a confined achievement should occupy the physical space of about one sixth of *In Memoriam*. In that mansion with many chambers which Keats imagined as awaiting the poet's exploration there is surely no other little room that is so mysteriously an everywhere. In a sense the Accelerator was indeed at work during Mr. Eliot's half-hour, and we were given what he himself has claimed that *The Tempest* gives us: centuries of the mind of Europe. The actual reading it would be impertinent to praise. One circumstance struck me. Although there were places (e.g. 11. 290, 400, 410, 418) at which I was decidedly made aware of my own faulty recreation of the poem, my governing impression was that *The Waste Land* had *always* come to me just as it was coming now. Perhaps this was not a flattering illusion, but rather a sign that on the printed page the poem is recorded in a notation of extreme precision. These subtle and often broken rhythms have their own almost absolute clarity. But I can see no means of knowing that in the title of the fifth part the stress is on the final and not in the penultimate word. Mr. Eliot made the emphatic point clear. It is not that the *thunder* speaks, but that the thunder *speaks*.

MICHAEL INNES

THE MOVIES

"The Rocking-Horse Winner," at the Marble Arch Odeon

Proposals for the reorganisation of the British film industry being two a penny, here are mine:

(1) Bonuses for all good films and fines for all bad ones.

(2) Heavy import duties on American films showing us how English we are, with Americans in the chief parts; on French films with ill-starred lovers lying dead in boathouses or burying one another in the desert—the more excruciating the agony the steeper the charge; and on all pieces, home or foreign, in which silence is represented by the roar of brass, animals crack jokes, judges secretly know of a happy ending, lovers look up and down each other's faces for new places to kiss, the hero composes disgusting music or the heroine wears the spectacles of frustration, and culture takes the form of a publisher of best-sellers, a maniac art-collector, or a dispenser of epigrams in Aden. By these means a staggering fund will be amassed, out of which

(3) A £1,000,000 prize will be offered for a funny British comedian.

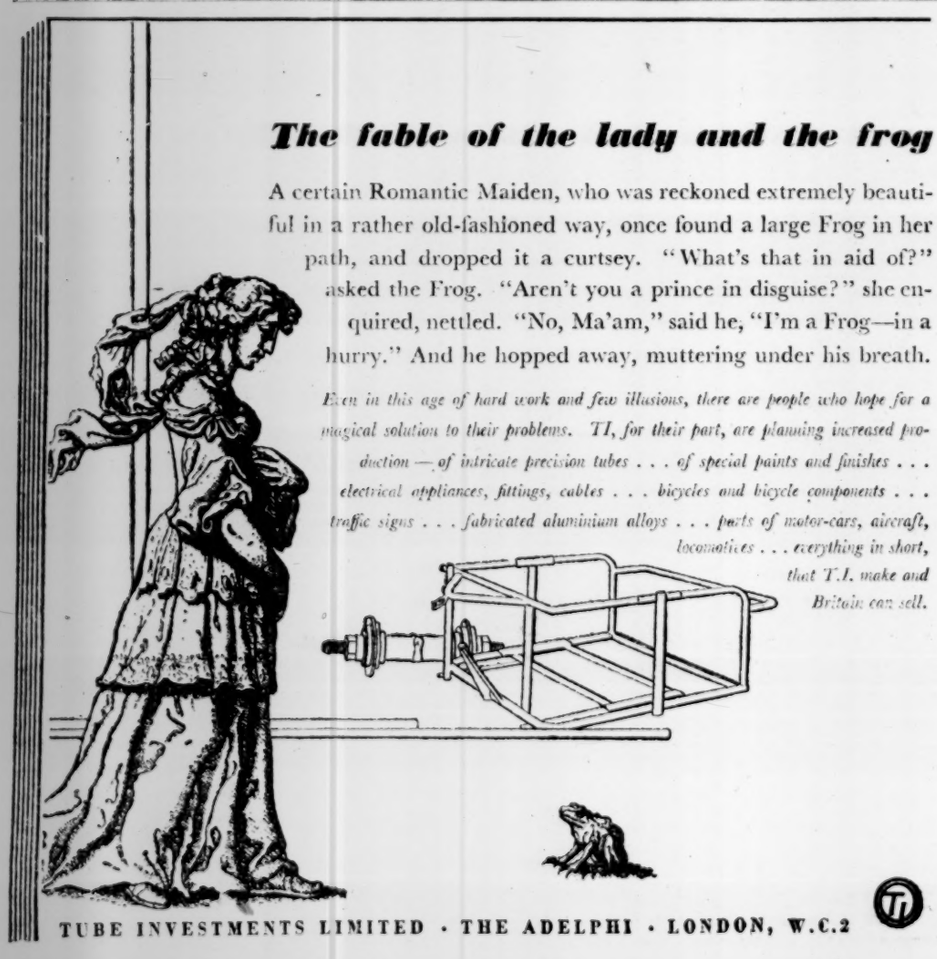
(4) Ten per cent. conditional rebate on entertainment tax, the condition being that the street-queue system is abolished; cinemas must either provide space for queues inside, where they can't be seen from the pavement, or let people walk straight in to empty seats on demand. This should improve the morale of audiences a good deal.

(5) Luxury tax on a sharply rising scale for every production costing more than, say, £80,000. Individual taxes on stars according to number of appearances in news and gossip columns.

(6) Special tax on all films adapted from or suggested by the printed word in whatever form—novel, play, story, poem, or newspaper article, to be determined by the amount of indebtedness and the length of the original: thus, £10,000 might be a fair assessment for *War and Peace* and £1 5s. 3½d. for Kipling's *If*.

(7) The effect of these various stimulations, allowances, and taxes would probably be to enrich the Exchequer and in a very short time bankrupt the Industry; but since it is that already no great harm would have been done. If British films survived, they would be the envy of the civilised world.

The week's films will neither make nor break hopes, though under the dispensation just outlined *The Rocking-Horse Winner* might gain rather more on the rewards than it lost on the fines. It belongs to the distinctive class, even if skill and intelligence haven't wholly succeeded; and its indebtedness—under section (6)—is of the less expensive kind—a short story by D. H. Lawrence. If films must continue to sponge on literature, better work up tales than whittle down novels. The fierce little Lawrence story, about the child of an extravagant loveless household who from corners catches the insistent whisper for "more money! more money!" and develops a mad gift of spotting winners on his rocking-horse, provides a situation, a tension, a wry fantasy on which it has been possible, up to a point, to enlarge fruitfully. As the boy's kindly accomplices, Mr. Ronald Squire turns up with a perfectly done uncle, and Mr. John Mills's lame chauffeur out of the stables is hardly less pleasing.


The fable of the lady and the frog
A certain Romantic Maiden, who was reckoned extremely beautiful in a rather old-fashioned way, once found a large Frog in her path, and dropped it a curtsey. "What's that in aid of?" asked the Frog. "Aren't you a prince in disguise?" she enquired, nettled. "No, Ma'am," said he, "I'm a Frog—in a hurry." And he hopped away, muttering under his breath.
Even in this age of hard work and few illusions, there are people who hope for a magical solution to their problems. TI, for their part, are planning increased production — of intricate precision tubes . . . of special paints and finishes . . . electrical appliances, fittings, cables . . . bicycles and bicycle components . . . traffic signs . . . fabricated aluminium alloys . . . parts of motor-cars, aircraft, locomotives . . . everything in short, that T.I. make and Britain can sell.
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But mother and child? All one's sympathies must depend on the strength with which the frightful ironies of their relationship are established; and here the film is content with soft implication. The final jab of the child's death after he has netted a fortune finds Miss Valerie Hobson (through no fault of hers) warm-hearted after all, and never much worse than graciously regardless. As for the boy (John Howard Davies) he is a mere charming automaton in a dream; again the fault is hardly his. This harsh little fairy-tale of Lawrence's, bitter to the taste as raw chestnut, couldn't, in fact, be turned into the *marron glacé* Mr. Anthony Pelissier has made of it without losing its essence. Still, it is an odd and beguiling film that has not quite justified its source.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

TEACHERS' SALARIES

SIR,—For one who speaks so intimately of the teaching profession, your correspondent "B.Sc." displays a remarkable ignorance of educational matters.

He refers scathingly to "elementary school teachers." The term "elementary school" is five years out of date and quite meaningless when applied to the present position, for by the Education Act of 1944 the statutory system of public education is organised in three progressive stages known as primary education, secondary education and further education.

"B.Sc." speaks of the graduate allowance as an example of "training and qualification allowances already granted to the more highly skilled teacher." There are two misconceptions here. First, the graduate allowance is not a training allowance: the majority of non-graduate teachers receive a longer teacher's training than graduates. Secondly, the graduate allowance is not paid as a recognition of skill: it is paid to graduates. Lecturing undergraduates demands more academic knowledge than educating, say, forty nursery children. Who can say that it always demands more skill?

"B.Sc." asserts that, "if there existed a National Union of Professional Teachers, upholding a high standing for the profession, it would have threatened to strike long ago." The National Union of Teachers (which, so far as I know, has no amateurs) has not threatened to strike, so all that your correspondent's remarks mean is that he is in disagreement with the N.U.T. It may be that this is because the N.U.T. is more concerned with professional standards than professional standing: a union of "B.Sc.'s" designing would apparently disregard its members' high responsibility to the nation's children.

As for the emergency-trained teachers, of whom "B.Sc." is so contemptuous, whilst there is doubtless among them as great a proportion of the incompetent and the inefficient as there is among the two-year trainees and the graduates, the majority of them are rendering good service to the cause of education. As a teacher of some experience, I can say that the emergency-trained teachers at my school are equal to anyone else on the male staff in energy, interest and devotion to work.

BASIL MAGER

42, Ingram Road,
Thornton Heath, Surrey.

[We have received many similar letters on this subject.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

WHITE SOUTH AFRICA

SIR,—Someone really ought to explain to Prof. Lancelot Hogben that scientific thinking does not consist of mistaking abuse for criticism. In your issue of November 19 he says that Charles Ould's statement (that the spread of Native education is far more extensive in the Union than elsewhere in Africa) is "wholly false"; he adds that Ould has cited no facts or figures to show that South Africa has done anything whatever for higher education for the Bantu.

This fortunate omission enables Hogben to assume that such facts and figures do not exist; and he relies on what must be a most treacherous memory of his short residence in South Africa for his sweeping denial. Here are a few facts which he could easily have discovered for himself.

The University College of Fort Hare was established in 1916, long before Professor Hogben was at Cape Town. "Methodist and Presbyterian Missionaries" did indeed play a large part in its foundation. So did the Church of England. And so did the Union Government. The then Prime Minister, General Louis Botha, opened the College, which his Government had helped to establish and which every South African Government since then has supported financially under the Higher Education Act.

Fort Hare has turned out hundreds of African graduates of the University of South Africa. These graduates took the same degrees as European students did and are now working as teachers, as journalists, as university lecturers, and in many other capacities. In 1946 there were 324 students at Fort Hare and of these 32 came from British territories where no higher education is provided. In other words, the Union Government, by paying a *per capita* grant to Fort Hare and, by large building grants, is subsidising higher education in British territories such as the Protectorates and the Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

Of the bursaries at Fort Hare, about 40 per cent are listed as "from Government sources." In addition to the students at Fort Hare, there are about 330 Natives attending the universities at Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban. On each of these students the Government pays a *per capita* grant as it does for every European student. About 30 per cent of the external students of the University of South Africa are non-European. Government expenditure on Native primary and secondary education and on teacher training is close on £3,000,000 a year. On Coloured education it is another £2,000,000.

So much for the facts. But Hogben is not content to argue from the ignorance of mere facts. He goes on to tell England her "plain duty," which is "to declare South Africa a pariah nation unworthy to be associated with the British Commonwealth at a time when we are giving a new meaning to the British way of life." Is Hogben interested in the welfare of Africans, or merely in demonstrating his own new-found purity and moral superiority? Great Britain has at least as much responsibility for the exploitation of Africans, in South Africa and elsewhere, as the "Backveld sadists." She won't escape that responsibility by denouncing her previous associates. In fact, her experience should discourage such naive simplification of categories into chromatic opposites of black and white, villain and angel. We are two among many South Africans who deplore a great deal in our treatment of our African citizens. But we can look for slight assistance from those like Professor Hogben whose approach is as emotive and non-factual as that of the least responsible of our own advocates of *apartheid*, and seriously embarrassing to those who are actually fighting for justice here.

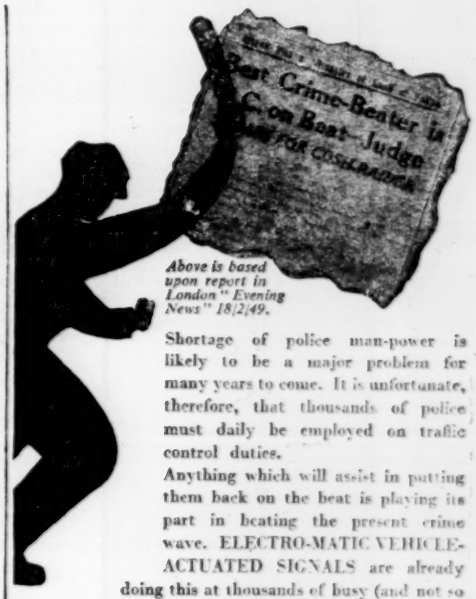
52 Dorp Street, Stellenbosch.

L. MARQUARD
N. J. MARQUARD

NORTH AFRICA

SIR,—I have read your correspondent's article on French North Africa, as well as the ensuing correspondence on the subject, with great interest. I should like to add that I fully concur with your correspondent's views, having had similar personal experiences of French police interference during my travels in Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

The author of the letter signed "Omega" affirms that your correspondent made the common mistake of neglecting the important Berbero-Kabyle elements in these countries. This argument is always brought up by the French, who have often tried to divide the Arab and Berber elements in their own interests, following the well-worn policy of dividing in order to reign the more securely. But I can assure him from personal experience that in Algeria the Nationalist leader Messali Hadj is most popular with the Kabyles, whose territory he visits whenever he is



Above is based upon report in London "Evening News" 18/2/49.

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not prevented by the French; and in Morocco, where the Nationalist party leaders are in close contact with the Berber tribes and *their* leaders, there is no evidence of the cleavage between the various ethnographical elements of the population being as sharp as some politicians would like. I spoke with many Berber leaders in Morocco and many of them are active supporters of the Istiqlal party there. In Tunisia, the famine-stricken Bedouins have received much assistance from the Destour Nationalist party, with whom they are certainly not at variance.

Does "Omega" really believe that a little organised flag-waving on the occasion of the visit of President Auriol to Algeria is indicative of the mood of the Algerian population? Only just recently, thanks to the Arab Nationalist press in Algiers, an official inquiry has finally been instituted by French Governor Naegelen into the "collective repression" methods still followed by the French police in the southern Kabyle districts. Not unnaturally, the Kabyles side with the Arab Nationalists. NINA EPTON

18 Tregunter Road, S.W.10.

WAR BLACK-OUT

SIR,—Critic, writing of the tendency of those born about 1900 to erase the recent war years from their memory, has raised an interesting question. Undoubtedly those of any age-group have undergone largely similar environmental influences (of all kinds) and under the stimulus of some outside events may tend to react similarly. But I am inclined to suspect that the explanation in this case is rather different. It is simply that we "have been here before," and even know how, when, and so on. I mean that we approached the war, in 1939, as potential combatants, but not, like those younger than ourselves, without any knowledge of what war meant. Indeed, over at least ten years we had been pondering on the coming war, so that very much of what happened had already been experienced. Few war events excited us, and were easily remembered, we were even bored by them. For those who were too young to have known the 1914-18 war, and hence to have speculated on the recent war in advance, with some experience to go on, more events tended to excite and to be remembered. In my own case I find I remembered certain threads of war development very vividly indeed; but those were threads of development which were entirely new to me, and therefore stimulated sufficiently to be remembered. The main events of the war—those by which one counts the years—have been, as with Critic, largely obliterated, so that in 1946 I frequently found myself saying "the year before last" when I should have said 1938. ALEC BROWN

Stubhampton Gate, Tarrant Gunville,
Blandford, Dorset.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

SIR,—Being a foreigner I do not understand English ways. I have been a Grammar School (day school) teacher for eight years; I am professor of education for ten years now, and have been doing child guidance work for eighteen years. I have seen and am seeing quite a lot of educational practice going on in my own country, but I never met in my whole life, and never heard of, a boy who was submitted to corporal punishment in school. This simply is not done in the Netherlands. The English may be a better educated people than we are, but even if this were so I cannot believe that English teachers would ascribe their better results to flogging.

Why are English boys supposed to be in a more urgent necessity than Dutch boys to "work off" by "hooliganism and bullying" whatever "repression" they went through? Must we suppose that less repression calls for less corporal punishment and that we Dutchmen are repressing our children less than English educators do theirs? If so—why corporal punishment? Or is corporal punishment no repression to the Praefectus' mind?

M. J. LANGEVELD

BULGARIAN TRIALS

SIR,—I would like to comment on the observations of Critic in your issue of the 10th instant on events in Bulgaria and the trial of Kostov and others. I think Critic implies—what less responsible writers assert—that the trial is not genuine and the defendants are innocent.

For myself, I will await the verbatim report of the trial, in order to form a view as fairly as I can, as I have done in a good many other cases. But I recall that many such trials have followed a pattern now familiar, but perhaps best illustrated by the trials of Zinoviev and others in 1936, and Radek and others in January, 1937. In each of these cases, foreign lawyers present at the trials—including myself at one and the U.S. Ambassador Davies at the other—were satisfied that the trials were fair, the accused guilty, and the confessions true; in each, the Western Press described the trials as fake, blood lust, and witchcraft; and in each, subsequent events showed beyond reasonable doubt that the accusations were in substance true. (And, in one case, the confession took much longer than Kostov's; Radek boasted that he withheld the facts from the prosecution for several months.)

Nor can I share your surprise that such prominent people should be found to betray their cause. I wish I could. But even in the mild air of Britain, politicians extolled as great Socialist heroes have deserted to their political enemies; and in Eastern Europe, with the many past opportunities for reactionary police to compromise Communists, and the inevitable present activity of Western agents and the old defeated ruling class, it is not surprising that some prominent people are led to treason. How hard, I wonder, would Western agents work in Britain if we had a whole-hearted Socialist revolution?

4 Essex Court, E.C.4. D. N. PRITT

[Critic comments on this letter in this week's "London Diary."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

GOD AND SCIENCE

SIR,—What the modern young man needs to know is how to detect the errors in the writings of C. E. M. Joad.

If we bring from nowhere a Creator to conjure up out of nothing the physical universe at a convenient nebulae stage, then we will need that device to get rid of the universe if we want to prove that it will end. Getting rid of the debris will be quite a job even for Dr. Joad. He will get no help from Physics.

It is fundamental to Physics that energy cannot be created or destroyed and from this it follows that, given a total or closed system such as we must consider the physical universe to be—whether bounded or infinite—then that system has always existed and will always exist. Nor does a consideration of entropy help Dr. Joad. If energetic processes are running down towards a dead level, then each consecutive unit of decline will take longer to happen than the preceding one and the end will come finally only after an infinitely long time. Long before that the world will have died for all practical purposes but it will never lie down. World without end in fact. This sort of conclusion ends other discussions of this type.

Science made little progress until it cleared the idea of God from its basic theories, and the reintroduction would create more problems than it would solve. Science is not atheistic; it is, by definition, not concerned.

Proofs of the existence of God have to be looked for in human experience; and, if individuals have no direct experience of God, they must remain sceptical or take their faith from other human beings, with all the dubiety that that implies.

It used to be said that, if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him. My own remarkable but not very communicable experience is that if God does exist then, in spite of His ubiquity and His powers of sudden death it is necessary to debunk Him or sink to crawling, fearful worship. Out of deference to ideas fundamental to theism which may be better than they do, in fact, seem to me, I remain agnostic. It is surely more honest and less mischievous to say that you do not know than to call your ignorance "God."

Dr. Joad's article seems to contain other errors which could not be cleared up in less space than he took to make them. F. R. GRIFFIN

138 Holystone Crescent,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 7.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"In our unpleasant century we are mostly displaced persons," says Professor Basil Willey in the latest of his pellucid background studies,* "and many feel tempted to take flight into the nineteenth century as into a promised land and settle there like illegal immigrants."

The attractions are obvious: peace, prosperity and freedom if one belonged to the right class and took care to avoid the England that foreigners like Marx and Hawthorne saw, where starvation forged ahead as fast as trade. Yet, even arriving among the assured, the illegal immigrant would discover that they, too, were distraught by the age they lived in. The artists had packed their bags for the Middle Ages, and found less and less—as Mr. Graham Hough has been reminding us in *The Last Romantics*—to feed the imagination in their own time. Among the teachers and believers the oppression of spirit was no less heavy, but for them there was no escape, for they were caught by war on two fronts: at the very moment when industrialism had brought chaos into social life, the tunnelling of German Higher Criticism undermined the received truths of Bible history. How was it possible to believe in miracles, in the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, in God Himself?

It is odd that such a time should be commended to us as a possible Arcadia, but the nature of a promised land depends on the mind it is promised to. The nineteenth century was the Arcadia of the conscience; the region where the energetic, the diligent and the earnest were rewarded, where reigned, in Professor Willey's words, "the unquestioning sense that life has a momentous meaning." The lightest act—perhaps especially the lightest act—carried its share of the moral burden. When George Eliot took a holiday in Italy from her enormous labours, conscience travelled indefatigably with her. "We must forever be ashamed of ourselves," she wrote—it is true, as Professor Willey points out, she was writing to her publisher—"if we don't work the better for it." To the good Wordsworthian, Mr. Aldous Huxley has informed us, a tour through Westmorland was as good as a visit to Jerusalem, but even by those grey and wind-ribbed northern tarns, the nibbled hills and modest promontories, places domesticated by poets and ruffled by thinkers, conscience was not allayed. "Really," said Thomas Arnold, retiring every summer to the Lakes from his labours in English education, "really, in these troublous times, it seems more than is allowable to be living, as we are here, in a place of so much rest and beauty." Conscience, one must conclude, was the voice of the tremendous Victorian energy.

If it was so in trifling matters, how much more imperious was conscience on the great issues. Mill, Thomas Arnold, Newman, George Eliot, Carlyle and Matthew Arnold—Professor Willey's chief subjects—had their notorious crises, where strenuous faith struggled with strenuous doubt, with an inner agony that matched the violence in society outside. To Professor Willey's immigrant this is the attraction. He finds seriousness, "faith, purpose and buoyancy." A large number of the Victorian problems have been handed down to us intact and unsolved. Many have become exacerbated—Mathew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* is still to the point and merely requires an appendix on the new horrors—but the mid-Victorians were sure that the problems were soluble, and that the climate of the future would not be less propitious than their own. Is that complacency? After two wars and their revolutions we have thought so, but a glance at their harassed writings does not suggest it.

Professor Willey's book begins with Coleridge, works back to Bentham to mark the break with the Age of Reason, and goes on to examine the interaction of the rationalist and the religious streams. His book does not follow the method of his earlier studies of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century backgrounds, but is the first volume of an inquiry into Victorian religion and ethics. Noticeable gaps are to be filled. No doubt more attention will be paid to the Nonconformists with whose vibrant but æsthetically depressing Zions Matthew Arnold became not unsympathetically familiar. There was pathos in the Puritans, and something mild, perhaps Wordsworthian, in the Victorian imagination always responded to that. If the Nonconformist manufacturer, discreetly slipping into the Anglican church when he had made his pile, has a large responsibility for the economic anarchy of the nineteenth century, his Noncomformist employees laid down the most powerful and consistent answer to the chaos. They were the backbone of Socialism and they were not rationalists. They were adept at reading Scripture or Mill with one eye closed; and in their egotism perhaps explain the extraordinary fame and influence of the egotism of Carlyle, whose God was himself.

It is hard to know in which of Professor Willey's two main genealogies to put the Nonconformists. Are they the heirs of Bentham and Mill or of Coleridge? That is to say, are they driven by Bentham's passion for veracity and benevolence, taking from the hesitant Mill his anxious notion of a socialism without loss of liberty, but comfortably ignoring his rejection of supernatural religion? Or are they Romantics caring less for facts than for meaning, in the tradition of Coleridge, "with his central teaching that life is the interpretation of opposites"? But in his present volume Professor Willey has no figure that presents difficulties of these kinds, though Carlyle is hidden in the multiple disguises and evasions of his style and Newman is followed "winding his dangerous way." Once he is freed, by Coleridge's influence, from Bibliolatry Thomas Arnold is able energetically to engage in the vigorous distribution of moral health. By Coleridge softened again, Mill is able to preserve the scientific faculty, and to become

> the steam-engine radical, frightened at his own progress, whistling for the flowery meadows, his power-loom prose booming out the sentiments of Rousseau or D. H. Lawrence! Seldom can mortal man have affirmed in accents less poetical how gracious, how benign is solitude. A joyless knowledge of the sources of joy pervades all Mill's work and his prose is grey with it.

In George Eliot the loss of formal faith is accompanied by a continuously agonised attempt to retain "the lasting meaning" of religion (which Mill believed to have been superseded) without being "religious." In Matthew Arnold the problem is that we cannot do without religion but cannot do with it as it is. Professor Willey's own position is quite clearly Christian; he speaks of Mill's "conversion (or rather perversion)" to the "Religion of Humanity," but his attitude can be illustrated by the view that

> most of the revolutionary movements of the last two hundred years—Encyclopædism, Chartism, Marxism—in so far as they were anti-Christian in doctrine, can be regarded in this way; their strength is the measure of the failure of "Christianity" to mediate its own impulse.

That is to say, the passion for humanity is derived from the very religious tradition the revolutionaries or reformers despise. So it must seem when we consider the worried minglings and partings of the streams of belief and unbelief in the nineteenth century; but in our own period, Marxism does not look like a Religion of Humanity and of what Christians have forgotten, but has all the appearance of a reversion to primitive religion; Hebraic in character, drilled to the Law and the Commandments, crowned by a jealous God, despising the Christian dispensation of love and mercy, exalting obedience, order, and the authority of priests. It has revived the tribal notion of a Chosen People.

But Professor Willey is not a polemical writer. Cool, placid, economical, sensitive and self-effacing, he writes with the beguiling simplicity of great learning, keeping his subjects in the foreground, himself almost concealed. His sympathy is continuous; as always in the best criticism, it is a form of curiosity, so that the great pleasure (and value) of his inquiry is that it really does disclose more and more of his subject. The essays on Carlyle and Mill are astonishingly gracious; those on Coleridge and Matthew Arnold rich and patient. They bring those dusty figures forward into speaking distance, yet with hardly any of those adventitious biographical touches which have been fashionable. The art of limpid exposition, with the self in abeyance or only noticeable in an occasional aside—which is nevertheless always telling—could hardly go further. And underlying a book which is both suggestive and filled with instruction, there is the warm, continuous implicit plea for a complete inner life.

V. S. PRITCHETT

* *Nineteenth Century Studies.* By Basil Willey. *Chatto & Windus.* 15s.

WHY, INWARD COMPANION

Why, inward companion, are you so dark with anguish?
A trickle of rancid water that oozes and veers,
Picking its sluggish way through slag and refuse
Down at length to the all-oblivious Ocean—
That might be fit comparison for your tears . . .

No, not of me are you grieving, nor for me either;
Though it seems that I am the dungeon in which you dwell,
Derelict, drear, with skeleton arms to heaven,
Wheels broken, abandoned, greenless, vacant and silent,
Nought living that eye can tell.

Blame any man might the world wherein he harbours,
Washing his hands, like Pilate, of all its woes;
Ay, and in deadly revolt at the evil and treachery
That has brought pure life to this pass; yet wrenched with sorrow,
Since he was its infamous maker full well he knows.

Not yours the blame. Why trouble me then with your presence?—
Linger no instant, most Beautiful, in this hell!
No touch of Time has marred your immutable visage;
Eros himself no more radiant was in his youth-time:
Or nearer draw, to thy homeless infidel!

WALTER DE LA MARE

HERE

Forgave I everything—
The heart's forebodings unless she were near
Who all things lovely made even lovelier;
The baffled hopes, the care, dismay, desire,
The mocking images that feed love's fire;
The glut of leaden days, the futile dream,
Night's stagnant brooding o'er its sluggish stream;
Yes, every anguished sigh, and unshed tear,
Pang of foul jealousy, the woe, the sweat . . .
But how forgive, forget,
In this bleak winter sere—
That she is here?

WALTER DE LA MARE

PROUST AS A SET BOOK

The Mind of Proust. By F. C. GREEN. *Cambridge.* 25s.

The reception of the great writer into the respectable, academic hall of immortals is inevitable. As far as English criticism is concerned, the publication of Professor Green's book marks this moment for Proust. Perhaps its very inevitability makes this degree-giving ceremony a dispiriting occasion for those who have enjoyed a more contemporary, and, as it must seem to them, more living approach; but it must be remembered that the extension of the appreciation of Proust from a coterie to a wider range of readers must have seemed equally deadening to his immediate circle. Unfortunately, *The Mind of Proust* suggests that Professor Green is not quite the right celebrity to launch the Proustian ship upon the ocean of "great French literature."

Of his deep admiration for Proust's work there can be no doubt; it is expressed in many sincere if rather naive passages; one is almost disarmed by it into accepting an *A la recherche du temps perdu*, which, as Proust would certainly have foretold, often bears little resemblance to the book which has long commanded one's devotion—almost disarmed, but not quite, for all his admiration and sincerity cannot disguise the fact that Professor Green's acceptance of Proust is partial only. His concerns are two: to see the work as part of the general tradition of French literature not only of the nineteenth, but also of the eighteenth century, and to evaluate the particular and revolutionary contribution which Proust made to this tradition. Few could be better equipped to perform the historical part of his task, although there are occasions when comparisons and parallels seem somewhat irrelevant, and there is surely little point in quoting a trite remark of Walpole's with the comment that "one must read Proust to realise the fundamental inaccuracy of this typically eighteenth-century observation." It is, however, in the evaluation of Proust's particular contribution that Professor Green's main work lies; he decides, and I think a survey of *A la recherche* as a whole must lead one to agree, that it is the equation of the moment of artistic conception with involuntary memory that is the continuous thread by which Proust's work is held together. From the incident of the madeleine to the final Guermantes reception is a long Odyssey, but it can only really be followed significantly if, as Professor Green asserts, we see it as the struggle of Marcel to endure this recreative agony of involuntary memory and so to emerge as an artist against all the distractions of social life, hypochondria, family affection and sexual jealousy. But not only does Professor Green see this as the fundamental issue, he also feels it to be of particular interest in its most self-conscious form, those moments, that is, when Marcel reflects upon the workings of his own mind and emotions. For him, then, the core of Proust's work lies in the isolated, reflective agonies of *La Prisonnière* and *Albertine Disparue*, and the analysis of these two books is, as a result, the only successful part of *The Mind of Proust*. Rejecting the more fashionable Freudian-biographical or Marxist-social methods of literary criticism for a re-creative account, which in its vaguely Ruskinian approach would probably have won Proust's own approval, Green writes illuminatingly on the "Albertine" books, once even, in an excellent passage on Proust's prose style, movingly. Even in this latter section of the book there is perhaps a strange atmosphere of the past in the over-attention to such outdated critics as Benda and Alain and to the dead donkey of Proust's conscious debt to Bergson, but *La Prisonnière* has on occasion been too neglected and the emphasis is not without value.

Nevertheless, however important the involuntary memory, Proust's work was not only an analysis of artistic creation; the living material of the earlier books is, at the least, as important, and here Professor Green is far less happy. Faced by a social world which he feels both trivial and shocking, he falls back upon an old-fashioned, coy, academic style of exposition which is both irritating and embarrassing. "In a charming image inspired by a Celtic superstition," "Love, it is said, laughs at locksmiths," "that amusing rascal Dr. Bartholo" are only examples, of which the most absurd is his account of Dr. Cottard, "a rising young physician but in all else the type of imbecile designated in English by the second and sixth letters of our alphabet"—surely a perfect Cottardisme! This failure to respond to the central part of Proust's work leads Professor Green in the first half of his book into treating us to a long restatement of Proust's narrative interspersed with irrelevant passages on the ideas of Bergson. It causes him to defend Proust against snobbery without understanding that the charge was by no means always meant to be defamatory. Finally it produces a series of shocked periphrases about the homosexual incidents which are hardly credible in a book published to-day. Professor Green's moral objections are, of course, legitimately his own, and in them a curious reproduction of the pre-1914 moral atmosphere in which the first part of *A la recherche* was published might have been unconsciously illuminating, but unfortunately his ignorance of the nature of this major symbol in Proust's work leads him into serious misunderstandings. The delicately balanced bisexual nature, for example, of St. Loup completely eludes him. The malicious side of that character, a product of his ambivalence appears meaningless, and his liaison with Morel a monstrous and inartistic volteface, despite the carefully placed clues of the lift boy and the restaurant scene.

If Professor Green had dealt only with those parts of Proust which appealed to him, giving us a more penetrating analysis of such psychological difficulties as intuitive foreknowledge, *The Mind of Proust* would, one feels, have been a shorter, less disappointing, less faintly-absurd book.

ANGUS WILSON

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THE LOW-DOWN ON FREUD

Freud. By HELEN WALKER PUNER. *Grey Walls Press.* 12s. 6d.

Our knowledge of Freud's life and personality is both greater and less than what we possess concerning any other thinker or writer of comparable stature. With unparalleled courage he revealed many of his inmost thoughts and those meannesses and pettinesses that the most exhibitionist autobiographer passes over in silence, in his early books, *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*; but he placed stern limits on these revelations; and he refused to publish or to have published any material which was not relevant to his scientific purposes, or which could cause pain to those near and dear to him, his parents, his wife or his children. Consequently we are left with the paradox that we know practically nothing of the childhood of the man who pointed out the overwhelming importance for adult character of the first six years of life, and even less concerning his sexual adjustment. In the interests of his nascent science he had had to expose himself to an extent that no serious thinker had ever done before; but temperamentally he appears to have been a scientific recluse who placed very great value on his privacy. He was to be judged by his works, not by his personality; and the figure which he presented to the world in the last thirty years of his life was austere, withdrawn, and somewhat inhuman. He did not wish to be a subject for peering curiosity; and his family and his intimate collaborators have respected his wish with great (perhaps even excessive) scrupulousness.

It was inevitable that sooner or later somebody should attempt to unmask this sphinx; and it can cause little surprise that this attempt has been made by an American journalist. Freud in his later years was an object of awe and reverence; and (as I have pointed out elsewhere) awe and reverence are almost the most painful emotions that Americans can undergo; they will make every effort to reduce the people evoking them to a status where such feelings will no longer be appropriate. Mrs. Puner has gone about this task with gusto; and it will not be her fault if anybody ever reveres Freud again.

Owing to the discretion of Freud's family and associates, Mrs. Puner has little material to go on beyond the auobiographical material in Freud's own works, and a little gossip (the sources of which are occasionally given). By placing the most unfavourable construction possible on anything Freud wrote, she is able to assemble an unpleasant picture of a jealous bully who crushed into submission his wife, his children, and all his associates whom he did not provoke into revolt, and who was consistently incapable of facing the truth about himself, truth which Mrs. Puner, however, has no difficulty in discovering.

According to Mrs. Puner, the two dominating motives in Freud's life and work were his unacknowledged hatred of his father and his dislike of being a Jew. As far as the first point is concerned, there is no reason to suppose that Freud was not fully aware of his negative feelings towards his father; the fact that he refrained from stating them in so many words can surely be ascribed to respect for his mother's feelings (she survived until her son was 74) rather than to psychological blindness. Freud also described in several places his ambivalent attitude to his status as a Jew; it procured him many slights and disadvantages and, since he was an atheist, practically no recompenses. Out of pride and self-consistency, he would not go through the (to him) meaningless rite of conversion; but it seems highly probable that he often wished he had been born of Christian parents.

Mrs. Puner writes on this subject with passion, and with the kind of inverted National-Socialist racism which appears to be typical of many American Zionists. It is surely no accident that for her the antonym of Jew is not Christian or Gentile but "Aryan." "Jung undoubtedly symbolised to Freud acceptance by the Aryan

world," she writes in discussing the second psychoanalytic Congress of 1910. And she makes the "Jewish-Aryan" conflict central to Freud's life, with Freud as the renegade finally going over to the enemy. Her argument is more ingenious than convincing. In 1914 Freud wrote a short paper on the *Moses of Michelangelo*; twenty-five years later, in his extreme old age, he published a book called *Moses and Monotheism*. Therefore, according to Mrs. Puner, Freud considered himself to be Moses. But the central argument of *Moses and Monotheism* is that Moses was an Egyptian, not a Jew, and that he taught the monotheism of Pharaoh Ikhnaton: therefore, according to Mrs. Puner:

> Like Moses, he implied, he was not a Jew. All this had nothing to do with him. There was some mistake. He, Freud, was a man of dignity and courage, not the butt of a paranoiac house painter. The fate of the common Jew was not his fate. He was a Gentile prince in disguise.
>
> It took Freud a lifetime to spew this wish . . . out from under the carefully maintained *cordon sanitaire* of his defences. . . . For Freud, at eighty-two, was at last saying, as directly as he could, that he hated his father. . . (and so on).

Readers familiar with Freud's own writings will find little new in this book; and (except as gossip) it can be of little interest to people unacquainted with psychoanalysis. Mrs. Puner expresses admiration for the abbreviated type of "analysis" practised by Franz Alexander and his associates, but gives no evidence to show why her preferences should be taken seriously. Students of the psychopathology of everyday life will, however, find one extremely revealing misprint on page 174. Mrs. Puner is quoting from Freud's *Autobiographical Study* concerning the ideas underlying *Totem and Taboo*:

> The son's rebelliousness and his affection for his father struggled against each other through a constant succession of compromises. This view of religion throws a particularly clear light upon the psychological basis of Christianity, in which, it may be added, the ceremony of the totem feast still survives, with but little distortion, in the form of *Communism*.

Freud, of course, had written "Communion"; but the fact that this misprint (the only one I noticed in the book) escaped all the stages of proof-reading throws an interesting light on the obsessive fears of American liberal Jewish intellectuals. It is unfortunately typical of Mrs. Puner's biased approach that she suppresses Freud's concluding sentence to the paragraph ("I should like explicitly to mention that this last observation was not made by me but is to be found in the works of Robertson Smith and Frazer"); instead she goes on to arraign "Freud's 'vision' of the cathedral of organised religion rising from the swamp of man's dark need to expiate the blood-guilt of parricide. . . ."

GEOFFREY GORER

FUN WITH SUMS

Mathematics and the Imagination. By EDWARD KASNER and JAMES NEWMAN. *Bell.* 15*s.*

Mathematics is in the first place a language in which we discuss those parts of the real world which can be described by numbers or by similar relations of order. But with the workaday business of translating the facts into this language there naturally goes, in those who are good at it, a pleasure in the activity itself. They find the language richer than its bare content; what is translated comes to mean less to them than the logic and the style of saying it; and from these overtones grows mathematics as a literature in its own right.

This intellectual pleasure need not be a monopoly of trained mathematicians. Amateurs who tease at the prime numbers or the theory of knots find for themselves the same exhilaration in the neat proof, the unexpected result, and the flash of insight arcing from one pole of knowledge to another. But there are few books to set them on these abstract adventures. Hogben's *Mathematics for the Million* has the sprightly manner, but it is designed to be a practical book. So is Pólya's *How to Solve It*, which shows at first hand how mathematicians tackle their work. The only book which treats modern mathematics as an end in itself is Courant and Robbins's delightful *What Is Mathematics?* but alas, that is too hard for the unprofessional.

Mathematics and the Imagination is a simpler and a welcome book. It deals almost wholly with the newer parts of mathematics, unheard of at school, which first astonish the bright freshman. These include probability, the transfinite, the logical paradoxes which Whitehead and Russell tried to meet, non-Euclidean geometries and their enlargement in topology, and the strange constructions of Brouwer and his school. All this is fresh, odd and unexpected; and since it is presented by a professional and an amateur, it should be enjoyable to both.

Certainly it is enjoyable to have recaptured here the feeling of Göttingen and Princeton, that a mathematical thought is put most crisply in a puzzle. Since this is a holiday review, let me share out that holiday mood by taking some classical puzzles from the book and putting them to you.

(1) Seven poker players break a new pack and cut but do not shuffle it. The dealer is seen to take his second and fourth cards from the bottom of the pack. However, on looking at their hands, no one cares to ask for a new deal. Instead, they make the dealer discard his hand and take the next five cards from the top. This is what he hoped; more often than not it betters his hand. But does it always win? Or how often?

(2) In a country where no man will leave his wife with other men in his absence, two couples come to a river which they must cross in a boat holding only two people. It is easy to see that the crossing will take five trips. But what if there are three couples? Or four couples?

(3) What (positive, whole) number fulfils the definition, "the smallest number which cannot be named in less than nineteen syllables"? And when you have it, answer the paradox: how is it that this sentence defines it in eighteen syllables?

(4) Draw a triangle with three equal sides. On the middle third of each side, draw triangles with equal sides (pointing outwards). You now have a Star of David with twelve sides. On the middle third of each of these sides, draw triangles with equal sides. Continue this process indefinitely. What will be the final area of this "snowflake" figure? And the length of its outline?

(5) A lively game for a few players is Nim. Pile any number of matches in any number of heaps. Each player on his turn must take at least one match, and may take as many as he likes, but they must be from one heap. The player to take the last match loses. I add that if there are only two players, there is a complete theory of the game. For example, what in this case is your winning move if you are faced with three heaps in which there are nine, five and three matches?

(6) Here is a topological trick for those who wear waistcoats. You post yourself on one side of the door, and the children on the other, leaving it ajar. Put your arm through the crack, and let them hold the sleeve of your jacket tightly round your wrist. When you let them open the door your jacket is still in place, but now your waistcoat is outside it, neatly buttoned and all. Think it out and, between ourselves, be sure to practise.

I do not find this trick in the book, but I remember James Newman putting it to me as a challenge, late one night on some wartime camp or airfield. In my turn I set him a puzzle whose inventor I have never discovered, which is this:

(7) If you take, say, the number 12, and put the first figure to the end, then you get 21; that is, you get 1¾ times the number you started with. What is the smallest number which, when its first figure is moved to the end, is increased to 1¾ times the number? I think I should warn you that this is best begun after the children have gone to bed, and that it will be as well to dig up a pencil and paper left over from Consequences.

J. BRONOWSKI

(Mr. Bronowski supplies answers to these problems at the end of the competition page.)

NEW NOVELS

The Apostle. By SHOLEM ASCH. *Macdonald.* 15*s.*

Affairs of the Heart. By MALCOLM MUGGERIDGE. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Long Shadow. By JON CLEARY. *Werner Laurie.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

From This Foundation. By THOMAS BRACKLEY. *Harvill Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The seven hundred pages of *The Apostle*, Sholem Asch's novel based on the life of St. Paul, cover such a vast background and deal with so many controversial issues that it would need a panel of Biblical scholars and Jewish and Christian theologians to criticise it adequately. The author not only sets out to imagine in minute detail the character, conversation, inmost thoughts, spiritual conflicts and illuminations of St. Paul himself but draws elaborate portraits of all the major personages in Acts and of many people who occur as mere names in his Epistles. Moreover such figures as Caligula, Nero, Poppæa, Seneca and innumerable others are not merely touched in but appear complete from the arrangement of their hair to the lacing of their sandals. History and topography embrace Jerusalem, Alexandria, Syria, Greece and Rome with a stupendous profusion of detail. This would be wearisome had not the author so faithfully thought himself into every scene whether it be a sun-drenched spectacle of butchery in the arena or the dim interior of an oil-seller's shop. This patient keeping of the eye on the object has its reward both for writer and reader. Over and over

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again vision reinforces sight as in the description of Paul's mother's face "unnaturally long, as though care and sorrow had drawn it out to write their records there" or of Peter's crucified feet in the beautiful, serene account of the martyrdom of the two apostles. The book is so evidently a great labour of love into which Sholem Asch has put all his thought, learning and spirituality that one can only treat it with reverence. As a novel it is cumbersome, slow-moving, repetitive and inordinately long. As a study of Christian and Jewish mentality, compassionate and sincere, it is a great achievement. Though many Christians will disagree with some of Sholem Asch's conjectures and arbitrary reconstructions it is a noble reminder of something we are all apt to forget—that Christianity is rooted in Israel and that the New Testament is deeply and intimately related to the Old.

One of the many difficulties of novel reviewing is the violent changes of focus it involves in the space of one short article. But I have to admit that it was a shameless pleasure to be allowed to laugh after seven hundred exalted pages without a single smile. Malcolm Muggeridge's brief, brilliant and irreverent satire is a joy to any reviewer suffering from a surfeit of forcible reading and writing. I must, however, issue two warnings about *Affairs of the Heart*. One is that it has a habit of suddenly plunging almost unfairly deep beneath its light surface. The other is that one's malicious giggle is liable to turn equally suddenly into an indignant squeal as one gets a smart jab below one's own belt. The story of the hatred of one collaborator for another, and of the mysterious death of Ossian Routledge which only tightens the loathsome bond for the surviving half of "Anthony Anstruther", is a good one. What really fascinated me were the still better story and still worse situation of the man who tells it. Anyone who has ever had to make a living by writing will have profound sympathy with Maxwell (actually Donald) Wraithby. "In a moment of folly and great need I had contracted to write an autobiography. In another moment of even greater folly and even greater need I had contracted to produce a work on the development of the novel in the eighteenth century." Having spent the advances on these two works (he is, of course, "getting on with them") he is reduced to Famous Love Stories of History at 15 gns. apiece. At this point Routledge's widow offers £500 for a private investigation into the circumstances of her husband's death. Wraithby cheerfully undertakes it and produces not only two solutions to the mystery but, far more surprisingly, the necessary report which consists of three words instead of the stipulated 30,000. After deducting the agent's 10 per cent. Wraithby still touches the giddy figure of £150 a word; he then prudently reverts to Famous Love Stories at 5 gns. a thousand. During his vague sleuthing he flashes a horribly veracious torch on various grim interiors including an agent's ante-room, a crematorium, the "morgue" of a newspaper and a club for embittered authors who have outlived or never achieved fame. *Affairs of the Heart* is at once poison and antidote to anyone familiar with the following plight:

> As I so often have on such occasions, I fastened a sheet of paper in my typewriter with the vague idea of covering it with words. This act is always momentarily reassuring . . . a taking up of action stations. Without the impulsion of immediate urgency, however, it is usually unproductive. The white space requiring to be filled seems illimitable; the little hammers requiring to be lifted stay complacently in their places; the words requiring to be written remain in confusion, like letters in a spelling game, all higgledy-piggledy. On this occasion, I stared hopelessly at the keyboard for some little while and then decided to go for a walk.

I foresee members of the Penumbra Club giving each other their review copies as Christmas presents.

The Long Shadow is by a young Australian, Jon Cleary, whose first novel was a prizewinner and in whom his publishers perceive "something of Graham Greene" though I am unable to do so myself. It deals with a murder and a hunted suspect and introduces an idiot, a character who has been in a mental home and another who goes mad. This presumably classes it as a "psychological" thriller. But the suspense, though so conscientiously worked up, is never unbearable and the psychiatry is too slick to be convincing. The author has evidently worked hard at his characters but does not manage to convey any real depth behind them, so that the general effect is oddly laboured and synthetic. Nevertheless Jon Cleary has a genuine talent for writing and when he describes landscapes, physical sensations, numbed states of mind, he can be very good indeed. At present he lacks the power of making a character stand on its own feet; however carefully he works out its psychological problems it remains a construction and not an individual. I wish that instead of "writing his way round the world" he would stay where he is and patiently study one or two actual human beings.

The last of this oddly assorted quartet infuriated me by its opening sentence: "This book is not a novel and has no plot or main character." Incidentally it has no dialogue either. *From This Foundation* is a kind of still-life-cum-documentary of a provincial town; its inhabitants, buildings, shops and domestic interiors. Thomas Brackley eventually broke down some of my irritated resistance by his acute, often poetic eye and the odd, sharp impressions he conveys. Though I kept telling myself this was material for a film or a series of paintings I must reluctantly admit that the particular effect could probably only have been produced in words. Mr. Brackley is something of a literary *enfant terrible*, by turns embarrassing and penetrating, tiresome and amusing. From my point of view he has just got away with it this time, but *only* just. If he had not caught me on a weak spot by "doing" cats remarkably well, I should probably have been after him with a besom.

ANTONIA WHITE

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116, HOPE STREET, GLASGOW, C.2.

TIME AND THE EQUATOR

Last Chance in Africa. By NEGLEY FARSON. *Gollancz.* 15s.

The cold facts of the problem presented by Kenya are familiar. In that equatorial freak, whose Highlands hold 2,500 European farms, there are about 30,000 Whites (two-fifths of the male adults being in Government service), some 100,000 Indians—shopkeepers, traders and skilled artisans—and over 5 million Africans. Out of this Negro population, whose numbers are rapidly increasing, less than 200,000 are working for Europeans—the average unskilled wage in agriculture and private industry being sixpence a day, plus eight shillings' worth of maize meal a month. The rest, excluded from the healthy, fertile uplands appropriated for the farms and ranches of White settlers, scratch subsistence from congested Reserves whose soil, thanks to feckless methods of farming, is being steadily eroded, and where the numbers of cattle, too few for the needs of the Black population, are much too large for the carrying-capacity of the land.

Out of his impressions, gathered from an extensive tour, of this problem-colony, Mr. Negley Farson has made a book which is at once sentimental and hard-headed, perceptive and perverse. He is so anxious to demonstrate his tough realism, his contempt for the Left-wing "intellectual's" idealistic desire to "protect" the African, that he comes near at times to taking sides with Herrenvolk pioneers. At other times he is almost ready to regret that the African was not left alone, with his tribal customs, to live and die—particularly die, since pressure of population is the gravest current problem. Yet, though he expresses for the present Governor of Kenya an admiration which many students of Sir Philip Mitchell's pro-settler record may find it difficult unreservedly to share, he makes no bones about admitting that the White man's claim to monopolise the Highlands is ultimately indefensible, and that a situation in which a tiny European minority dominates selfishly a community whose masses are politically inarticulate but racially antagonistic is terribly precarious.

Mr. Farson's outstanding merit as a reporter is that he has few prejudices—except perhaps against the infiltration of Africa by Big Business—and a great capacity for liking his fellow man, even if his skin is black. He seems to have had no great use for Jomo Kenyatta, the President of the African Union, whom he clearly regards as an egocentric political opportunist; but he writes with great sympathy and insight of the millions of Kenya's native peoples—Masai, Kikuyu, Wakamba—whose old self-respect we have destroyed, without as yet putting anything worth while in its place. What White settlement has done is to implant suspicion—suspicion of European intentions so deep that even the best and most disinterested schemes of the administration for soil preservation in the Reserves fail wretchedly to secure African co-operation. That, in brief, is the keynote of Africa's tragedy: the meeting of White and Black has filled each race with a sense of angry frustration.

What is to be done about it? Mr. Farson is quite clear in his mind that the solution is not to be sought by allowing the White settlers to establish, either in Equatorial or Central Africa, federal Dominions which would be "strong enough to stand up to Whitehall" and whose aims would be unqualified exploitation of the Africans. He is equally emphatic that "development" will in the end be rejected by the Africans in bloodshed and chaos if the enterprises are run primarily for Europe's benefit—a comment apposite, one may note, to the Groundnuts Scheme in Tanganyika. But these are negative conclusions. Positively, as he tours Kenya and makes friends among Game Wardens, Provincial Commissioners and over-worked District Officers, he approaches closely the attitude in which Kipling wrote of a vanished Indian administration, half a century ago. It was, according to its lights, an admirable administration—just, incorruptible, and altruistic. And in Kenya to-day, one may agree with Mr. Farson, that the District Commissioner is also The Protector of the Poor—often from the D.C.'s own countrymen. But can time, even on the equator, be arrested by the kindly, trict paternalism of Strickland Sahib? Is that "personal contact" between ruler and ruled, whose interruption in Tanganyika by U.N. trusteeship Mr. Farson deplores, an adequate twentieth-century solution?

The author of *Last Chance* has, I suspect, his doubts. He notes gloomily that, in Kenya, the water-table is falling ominously; that good administration and even the war on the tsetse-fly only aggravate the problem of over-population; that the White settlers have as much to learn of social obligations as the Natives; and that—witness the queer surges of fanatical religious movements—something is poisoning the African soul. From that frustrated ferment what will emerge? Conceivably a Black Communism of an emotional and unstable type: there is sadly

little African material on which to base a smooth, evolutionary transition towards democratic self-government, and education on European lines is apt to produce an African spiv. For all the difficulties, a very wise, very strong Colonial Secretary might gain time—time in which the Black man might learn to respect and co-operate with the White man, if the White man will let him. But Dr. Malan and his like are one ominous portent; and the red flags that fly over more and more of the Asiatic land-mass are another. Time on the equator is not at the White man's command.

AYLMER VALLANCE

HAPPY FAR-OFF THINGS

Wishful Cooking. By EMILY LINA MIRRLEES and M. R. COKER. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Since the War cookery books have found an established place in the reading of the general public and they are of two varieties: those which give possible ways of preparing our rations so that they become comparatively edible, and those that are escapist literature recalling nostalgically an age that is gone, books which are fiction rather than reality, which one reads as one might romantic novels for recreation and relaxation and not for advice on the practical conduct of one's life or love affairs. This book is of the second variety. It is indeed planned for leisurely reading rather than for rough work in the kitchen. It is beautifully produced and expensive, well printed on fine paper and worthy of well-manicured hands to hold it; it would be inconceivable to imagine it defiled by greasy fingers in rough use. It is a book for a mistress who is well served by an experienced cook and kitchen-maids, to whom she would communicate the chosen recipes, knowing they would need no further guidance. It has obviously been intended for recreation rather than for practical use for no hint is given of the quantity produced by the various recipes, nor how many people they are intended to serve. There is only one fault in the production, the French accents have been omitted which gives a comical and mysterious appearance to dishes called "Rabbit Pate" and "Salmon Pate."

The book is well named *Wishful Cooking* for its recipes demand lashings of cream, butter and wine. Its authors' aim has been to revive the true tradition of cultivated cookery before it is lost entirely to a new generation. It is a book which implies also a society that has vanished, which laid much store on social differences and distinction. There is a biographical section which gives details about those who have provided certain of the recipes. We learn that one is the wife of the last living Waterloo officer; another is the daughter of a Governor of the West Indies; another the wife of a General of the Inniskilling Dragoons; another the wife of Air Marshal Sir John Baldwin; another is a well-known singer of Negro spirituals; but we are told nothing of their qualifications as cooks. We learn from this biographical section that Ellen Anderson, the cook of the compilers of the book—one of the few professionals who figure in its pages—was lent to Trinity Lodge, Cambridge, to cook for H.M. King George V, yet the only example of her culinary art, a mince collop, is more suitable for a meal in the college of *A Room of One's Own* than for a ceremonial feast. Was this all his royal Majesty was offered? There are other perfectly commonplace recipes which gain nothing from being supported by distinguished names. A fish-ball recipe familiar to most schools and colleges does not become interesting because its author is described as an "inspired cook," nor an ordinary sardine and potato cake become exciting because its author is stated to be "passionately interested in food."

Nevertheless the book is not merely a collection of such simple recipes given distinction by being supported by noble names. It has the advantage of being catholic and universal in its scope with recipes from almost every country in the world, the most interesting of which, as a matter of fact, are anonymous. There is a succulent crab bisque which only an inspired cook could have conceived, that is worthy of immortalising its author, there is a pheasant dish with oyster sauce which sounds unusual and exciting. There is an original recipe for crab muffin as a breakfast or lunch dish which is possible to achieve even with present-day shortages, since it could be concocted from tinned crab—if fresh were unobtainable or too dear—with mushrooms easily obtained in the right season; ration cheese could, at a pinch, serve for the parmesan. This could easily be prepared by an inexperienced cook and it would make a pleasant change from kippers, fish cakes or cottage pie. There are other recipes equally appetising.

ENID STARKIE

THE DARK PARSONAGE

The Four Brontës. By LAWRENCE and E. M. HANSON. *Oxford University Press.* 25*s.*

This sane and comprehensive book ("a full and accurate one-volume life using all existing material") is one which the present eventful state of Brontë criticism makes very acceptable. It is a sign, we hope, of a halt in the sentimental theorising that flourished between the indispensable Gaskell biography and the profoundly interesting work of the last ten years on the juvenile writings and on Emily's poems. For truth does not lessen the strangeness of its story.

The fixed centre of the Brontë life was the stone-walled stone-flagged, uncurtained parsonage. The imagination of its nursery was easily fired—by current politics as much as by uncensored reading in "mad Methodist magazines," or Ossian, or Scott. Charlotte at eleven—no Catholic—describes their tense excitement at the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill:

> Oh, those six months from the time of the King's Speech to the end! Nobody could write, think, or speak on any subject but the Catholic question, and the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Peel. I remember the day when the Intelligence Extraordinary came with Mr. Peel's speech in it, containing the terms on which the Catholics were to be let in! With what eagerness papa tore off the cover, and how we all gathered round him, and with what breathless anxiety we listened, as one by one they were disclosed, and explained, and argued upon so ably and so well.

Statesmen and soldiers, invested with absolute qualities, figure in the earliest of the sagas which were to engross the family—Emily most completely—for nearly twenty years: Charlotte and Branwell's power-fantasy, the wildly romantic Angria; Emily's and Anne's nobler though no less bloodthirsty Gondal where, invariably, "love bows before patriotism or principle." In the miniature books where these stories and poems were written, the whole Brontë experience was reflected. Thus, Emily's despair outside the parsonage walls turns later into a dream-exile:

> How gloomy grows the Night! 'Tis Gondal's wind that blows.
> I shall not tread again the deep glens where it rose—
> I feel it on my face—Where, wild blast, dost thou roam?
> What do we, wanderer, here, so far away from home?

But perhaps the most striking clue to the nature of her imaginary life is a poem half childish legend, half visionary exposition—the mysterious and haunting *Silent is the House*. It is printed in this book.

How much the four Brontës were together; how like were their occupations and background, we are constantly reminded. Yet in temperament and in the creative use of their experience their difference was fundamental. Anne's books faithfully reflect her modest adventures. Yet who could tell from *Wuthering Heights* that Emily had ever been at a school, or in Brussels? Outside her home, it appears, she withdrew into herself, refusing to receive any impressions at all. Unhappiness, though, could not keep Charlotte from observing with her novelist's eye. The most practical and responsible, the least fatalistic, she is of necessity less sympathetic than the self-contained Emily or the tranquil Anne, the one preferring, the other resigned to, the unbroken childhood—outwardly eventless, inwardly violent, and wholly absorbing. Could they, after Charlotte had pushed them out of the Gondal world into the reality of adult novel-writing, have returned to that refuge? Death closed, or perhaps answered the question. Only Charlotte truly wished to leave the sheltering parsonage. Ironically, it was her fate to be left there alone, the last one living, without, any longer, will or energy to leave. "For society," she commented, "long seclusion has in a great measure unfitted me. The prisoner in solitary confinement—" (a real Angrian image) "the toad in the block of marble—all in time shape themselves to their lot." She was, at this time, a national figure.

Branwell's part in the Brontë biography—a curious one—is fairly assessed in this study. The only boy, he had known much praise, little criticism. A story set down by Charlotte suggests her clever brother's ambitions and his vanity. Were his sisters, he was asked, as queer as he? "Oh," he replies, "they are miserable, silly creatures, not worth talking about." As for himself, he is "not satisfied with being a sign-painter in the village, as Charlotte and them things were with being sempstresses." Yet when the chance came to leave the village, years of vivid dream unfitted him for reality. He was eighteen when he left for London, whose streets he knew well from maps, to study art at the Academy. The galleries remained unvisited; the letters of introduction undelivered. The odd thing is that his neurosis is exactly recorded, even, in a sense, explained, through a character in one of his own Angrian stories written on his return. The rest of his life is a sordid tale of drink, debt, and failure. Charlotte, his old playmate, the only one for whose opinion he cared, despised him for his weakness. Anne, deeply affected by her

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aunt's Methodist teaching, feared for his damnation. Yet he was, for the three sisters, the one direct link with the reckless masculine world which appears, in various forms, in their novels. Branwell did, after all, have his part in the Brontë literature, but it was as inspiration, not as creator.

The analysis of the Brontës' effect on one another is the most interesting feature of this book; but other matters deserve mention—the inclusion of Emily's chief poems in their original form, and in an enlightening context; the good bibliography; the accuracy of detail, authority being given for the least fact. At the same time, the critical passages show an imagination that is far from pedantic. It had not hitherto struck me, for instance, how effective in *Jane Eyre* was Rochester's constant use of the heroine's name, which, "with almost every possible nuance, sounds through the book like a refrain." I would question only one statement (two, if a reference to Rogers as Poet Laureate is included)—that "like the rest of the Victorians, Anne's brutal scenes are too often improbable." It is not merely that Haworth village and the houses in which Anne was governess could between them have supplied any episode in *Wildfell Hall* or *Agnes Gray*. The remark suggests that its author was not only unaware of Anne's literal mind but of the dual nature of early Victorian life. This is not borne out elsewhere in a book which seems qualified, indeed, more than any other since Mrs. Gaskell's, to serve as the standard Brontë biography.

NAOMI LEWIS

Travelling Tongues. By KENNETH HARRIS. *Murray.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Harris was a member of the Oxford debating team which visited the United States in the autumn of 1947. With his two colleagues he spent five months visiting colleges in 43 states and this is the story of his experiences and impressions. Avoiding statistics and facts about politics and economics, Mr. Harris has concentrated rather upon the attitudes and characteristics of the American people. He tells many anecdotes about their friendliness, their exuberance, their ignorance and prejudices. He skilfully evokes the atmosphere of life on the college campus, at the football game, in the fraternity houses, and behind the scenes in the Hollywood studio. The views and habits of the ordinary American come alive when the author sets down his conversations with cab-drivers in New York, Negroes in a Southern town, a policeman in Washington, a farmer in the West, and the owner of a funeral parlour in the Middle West. But this book has its weaknesses. First, in his effort to avoid dullness—in which he is successful—Mr. Harris has tended to mistake superficiality for a light touch. Second, the reader gets no picture of the size and complexity of the United States. In many cases, the author uses pseudonyms for the names of towns and colleges and he conveys no real idea of the immense distances which he travelled. Finally, and most important, in his attempt to show the similarities of behaviour between people as far apart as New York and San Francisco, he has failed to bring out the differences and complexities of American life. The reader is by now aware of such facts as that young Americans make love in automobiles and that private enterprise is a passionate faith in the United States. That, after all, is the stereotype, and Mr. Harris has chosen merely to report once more that the stereotype still exists. But it is the diversity that really matters.

Six Criminal Women. By ELIZABETH JENKINS. *Sampson Low.* 10s. 6d.

The six women are Madame Rachel Leverson, the Victorian beauty culturist; Alice Perrers, mistress of Edward III; Jane Webb, eighteenth-century pickpocket; Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset; Lady Ivie, brought before Jeffreys for forgery of deeds, and Mrs. Cox, in the "Balham Mystery." Apparently a compilation in the "stranger than fiction" manner, there are interests, as so frequently happens in this *genre*, far surpassing the theme. Nothing but the dependence of the uncertain moralist on her prey compels Miss Jenkins so searchingly to re-animate the rare business contrivings of Madame Leverson, who found Jordan Water in the pump and mothered the slogan "Beautiful for Ever"; her reconstruction of the social rites and games at Court in which Frances Howard and Robert Carr moved so methodically to their decrepitude is the best thing in the book, achieving also in style something of the atmosphere of the Jacobean age. A rather fine portrait of Edward III and a sometimes moving description of his "frailty" go to the making of "Alice Perrers"; the author's skill and perhaps her interest decline by the time she reaches the "Balham Mystery" and, by stopping short of Le Fanu, she misses opportunities of a more analytical approach. This is a book of considerably more worth than its many antecedents would suggest, and than the jacket would warn us of; and perhaps than the author had modestly intended.

Week-end Competitions

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS COMPETITION

Set by Giles Romilly

LE BOIS AMICAL

Nous avons pensé des choses pures
Côte à côte, le long des chemins,
Nous nous sommes tenus par les mains
Sans dire . . . parmi les fleurs obscures;

Nous marchions comme des fiancés
Seuls, dans la nuit verte des prairies;
Nous partagions ce fruit de féeries
La lune amicale aux insensés

Et puis, nous sommes morts sur la mousse,
Très loin, tout seuls parmi l'ombre douce
De ce bois intime et murmurant;
Et là-haut, dans la lumière immense,
Nous nous sommes trouvés en pleurant
O mon cher compagnon de silence!

PAUL VALÉRY

Competitors are invited, for prizes of six guineas to translate this poem into English verse, with or without rhyme. Entries by January 3rd.

No. 1,036

Set by Thomas Smallbones

The usual prizes are offered for cautionary tales for parents or children appropriate to the time of year. Limit 14 lines. Entries by January 3rd.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,033

Set by Richard Lister

For the usual prizes, competitors are invited to invent an anecdote of not more than 150 words which begins with the words: "The four people present were all white . . ."; and which includes somewhere in it the phrase "the tea was already cold"; and which ends with the words "I only know I didn't."

Report by Richard Lister

The shades of *Blackwood's* and Maugham and Conrad and M. R. James hovered over the best of a large entry: a sociologist might detect the bad influence of the films over the worst. But the anecdote mustn't try to get too much in. Not the whole of a yarn condensed from *Chums* but a moment, freezing or embarrassing or disturbingly inexplicable. There were ingenious variations after the opening, Whitechapel spivs (D. R. Peddis), white petrol users (Geo. B. Dukine) the morally white, the athletically white, ghosts, paper hangers, ceiling painters, white Russians (R. Tilley), white slavers, white mice fanciers (Hugh Stirrat). But perhaps the ingenuity should have been expended less on finding something different than on really *using* the data. *Four* people . . . *all* white: the tea, ideally, should have helped on the anecdote. The last words clinched it. These anyhow were the principles on which the entry was sorted. Other runners-up were: R. Tilley, Margaret Usborne, H. B. S. Mikeown, Fergie, Kenneth G. Fry, Pithecus, H.J.R., F. L. Peatfield, G. Medd, M. R. Dunnett.

Two guineas to Isabel Finlayson: a guinea each to P. G., A. M. Howe, D. G., and Bernard Rebel.

The four people present were all white.

"Last time there was only one White Rabbit," objected Alice.

"Can't do multiplication!" snorted the Rabbits, "It's the Health Service, you see. Look in any consulting-room. Oh, our ears and whiskers! we'll be late for surgery. Oh, our wigs and dentures!"

"Wait for tea . . ." Alice began; but the tea was already cold. At a side-table the Mad Hatter poised a knife undecidedly over an enormous cake.

"Fair shares for all," he muttered; "but it's difficult to make the slices *look* the same, even when one ingredient is the very best butter."

"It will cost you more, you know," said a small, sweet voice from the tea-things. Looking into the sugar-basin Alice was surprised to see Mr. Cube.

"Why, it's nothing but a Tory story!" she exclaimed.

"I don't know who waited for the end of the party," she told the Kitten later. "I only know I didn't."

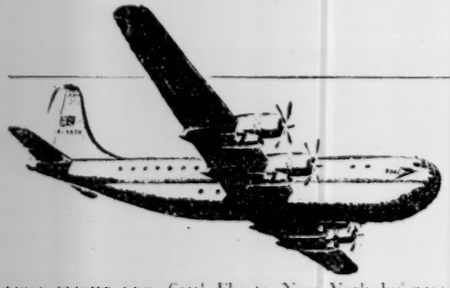
ISABEL FINLAYSON

The four people present were all white and shining, though still unaccustomed to their harps and wings, and were speculating on the reasons for their allocation.

"My scrupulous truthfulness," suggested the first. "I neither exaggerated myself, nor failed to point out exaggerations in the stories told by others."

"My indifference towards material comforts," said the second. "If the toast served to me was burnt, or if the tea was already cold, I made no complaint—scarcely a remark."

"My active interest in others," said the third. "However delicate the situation, and however thankless the task, I spared no pains in inducing them to act as I thought best for them. And how," she



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added, turning to the fourth, "did you qualify for eternal bliss?"

"Well," he replied, lowering his eyes—was it humility, or a desperate search for escape? "I only know I didn't."

P. G.

The four people present were all white, but into the one vacant seat at their table in the Bloomsbury tea-shop quietly slipped a Negro.

The four rose immediately with their cups and plates and found places elsewhere.

At the next table the last drop of the tea was already cold in my cup, my plate was empty and I was already on my feet, taking my bill from the waitress.

Of course I might have ordered another cup of tea at the table with the lonely Negro. I only know I didn't.

A. M. Howe

The four people present were all white with flour: the miller, his wife, his pretty daughter and her husband. They stood there in the living room of the old mill, talking angrily; the tea was already cold. Two young Cambridge undergraduates—the university town was a bare dozen miles away—had just left: they had in fact almost been thrown out.

"That's the seventh couple since last Sunday," said the miller, "All from Cambridge, all wanting to buy flour and then wanting to stay the night." "That last young fellow was downright impudent," added his wife, "Insisting on seeing the room where we all slept."

They did not know that a practical joker, better acquainted with the Canterbury Tales than with the maxim autre temps, autre moeurs, was at work.

"And as for what that dirty little rat said about me," sobbed the miller's daughter, "I only know I didn't."

D. G.

The four people present were all white—four anæmic men with but one purpose.

"Will you pass it, please?" the First Man said to the Second.

"Will you pass it, please?" the Second said to the Third.

"Will you pass it, please?" the Third Man (no relation) said to the Fourth.

"I refuse," said the Fourth Man. Whereupon the Third shot him.

"Will you pass it, please?" repeated the First.

"Will you pass it, please?" repeated the Second.

"Not me," said the Third and was shot by the Second.

"Will you pass it, please?" asked the First Man for the third time. The Second was quick to learn from experience.

"Oh no you don't," he shouted and shot himself.

When the Great Detective arrived the tea was already cold. So were three men.

"Who done it?" he asked.

And the man who stayed warm replied: "I only know I didn't."

Bernard Rebel

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The four people present were all white, strained, haggard, and the atmosphere vibrated with an intolerable tension. The Padre's sensitive face twitched and he cleared his throat repeatedly, the doctor bit on the stem of his pipe. I read and re-read the copy of the notice just pasted up outside the prison as if by some strange compulsion. Suddenly the Governor said: "I've heard some curious 'last words' but today's beat all. 'The Government kindly invited me to choose this morning's breakfast' the prisoner said 'and my demands were simply tea and toast—I always eat sparingly before a—long journey. It seems hard, therefore, that by the time it reached me the tea was already cold.'" As he spoke the Governor poured out the hot strong tea I had just brought in. I hope he enjoyed it. I only know I didn't.

Dorothy Crosbie

The four people present were all White by name and dressed in black. They had returned from the funeral of the father, old Cornelius White. Cornelius would like to have been there, he enjoyed food. But ten feet of earth, a coffin, and a stiffness of body held him. In any case, he'd have received a cold welcome. His family wished him dead years ago. Professionally, they all associated with death: Humphrey, a doctor; Charlotte, a matron; Oscar, a chemist; and Jasper, a vet. The unattractive funeral spread consisted of corned beef with pickles, followed by seed cake and the tea was already cold when they started., Humphrey spoke. "The coroner didn't like the empty arsenic bottle found under the old boy's mattress." Humphrey looked around suspiciously. "I wonder who put it there." A faint ghostly voice, coming from the direction of the churchyard, muttered: "I only know I didn't."

J. E. Park

FUN WITH SUMS

Here, briefly, are the answers to the puzzle in my review on page 761.

(1) Since cutting does not change the order of the new pack, each player except the dealer gets a Full House. The dealer's five fresh cards are in sequence, but in order to win here they must be in one suit—a Straight Flush. This gives nine possibilities out of each thirteen. (I assume all cuts equally likely and legal.)

(2) This puzzle dates from the sixteenth century. Under its taboos it takes eleven trips to get three couples across the river. Four couples never can cross.

(3) If no contractions are allowed, "the smallest number which cannot be named in less than nineteen syllables" is 111,777. True, the phrase in inverted commas defines it in eighteen syllables, but this is a paradox only because we are confounding definitions of different types—much as if we were to name the number in one syllable by pointing to it and saying "Look!"

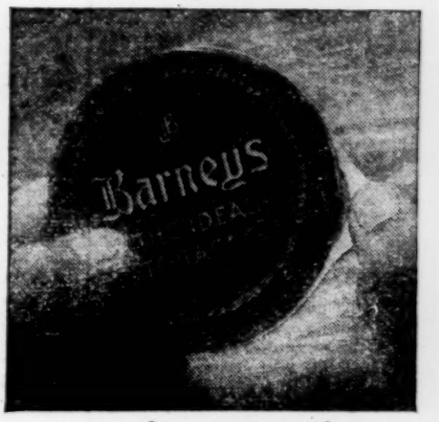
(4) At each step the area added to the "snowflake" figure is 4/9 of the area added at the last step; but the outline is increased by 4/3. Hence the area remains less than a finite limit, which is the original triangle plus 3/5; but the length of its outline increases without limit.

(5) Remove three matches from the heap of nine. The number of matches in the three heaps is then
6 which is (1 x 4) plus (1 x 2) plus 0,
5 which is (1 x 4) plus (0 x 2) plus 1,
and 3 which is (0 x 4) plus (1 x 2) plus 1.
This is characteristic of winning positions at Nim between two players: when the numbers of matches in the heaps are set out in this way in columns in powers of 2, the number of 1's in each column must be even. (The only exceptions are at the end of the game.)

(6) Slip your jacket and waistcoat off the free arm and let them slide down to the held wrist. Now stuff the jacket through the armhole of the waistcoat there: this is the critical move which gets the jacket sleeve inside the armhole of the waistcoat on the held arm. Once this is done, you can slip first the jacket and then the waistcoat on to the free arm, and button to taste.

(7) The smallest number which becomes 1½ times as large when its first figure is moved to the last place is 1,176,470,588,235,294.

J. Bronowski



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